

SERMONS
AGAINST
POPERY.

By the late Reverend

Mr. John Billingsley.



LONDON:

Printed for *S. Billingsley* at the *Judge's-Head*
in *Chancery-Lane*; and 'Sold by *R. Ford* at the
Angel, and *J. Morley* at the *Cross-Keys* in the
Poultry, 1723.

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ACQUITT

TOPPER

THE

MR. JOHN BILLYNGHOP



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 Strand, 1773.

THE
PREFACE.

 *HE Christian Religion is the clearest Discovery of the noblest Truths; and most friendly to all the Interests of Mankind: It contains a well-attested Revelation of the Will of God, of Things which most concern Us, and where natural Light was most defective; as the Principles and Measures of our Obedience, the Way of Acceptance with God, and the Hopes of eternal Life. We are instructed how We may walk so as that we may please God; and, Life and Immortality are brought to Light by the Gospel. And it best consults the Welfare of Men in all their particular Interests, and publick Rights: for it strictly enjoins and*

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enforces all the Instances of personal and relative Duties, the Government of unruly Passions, and the Exercise of mutual Forbearance and universal Love. The Grace of God, which bringeth Salvation, teacheth Us to deny Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, and to live soberly and righteously and godly in this present world; to be Subject to civil Rulers, for Conscience sake, who are the Ministers of God to us for Good; to honour all Men, love the Brotherhood, fear God, and honour the King. So that whenever it shall come to be universally embraced and pursued in the World, it will open a new and glorious Scene of Things, and introduce a State of Light, and Purity, and Peace. I think no condition of the Christian Church has ever yet reached the Import of that Prophetick Representation; Isai. xi. 6--9. The Wolf shall dwell with the Lamb----They shall not hurt nor devour in all my holy Mountain; for the Earth shall be full

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full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea.

Popery is the greatest Corruption of Christianity, which has introduced a strange Mixture into the Christian Doctrine and Worship; and changed the Simplicity of the Gospel, as it was left by Christ and the Apostles, into many absurd and dangerous Opinions, and burdensome and ridiculous Rites. It teaches, like the antient Jews, for Doctrines, the Commandments of Men; and in several Instances, has made the Commandments of God of none Effect by the Traditions of Men: And, like the judaising Christians, it has destroyed the Liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, and brought in a new Law of Commandments contain'd in Ordinances, of Mens Invention; when Christ has deliver'd us from the old, which was of God's own Appointment. 'Tis in direct Opposition to that of Christ's, a meer worldly Kingdom and Sanctuary, consisting in external Pomp, and supported

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ported by carnal Politicks, and the Interests of this *World*. Besides, 'Tis the greatest Enemy to all our Christian and Natural Rights; for it denies Men the Use of the holy Scripture, and the plainest Appointments of Christ; it forbids all free Enquiry, and Exercise of private Judgment; it cherishes Ignorance and implicit Faith, and keeps Men under a spiritual Tyranny and Bondage; it dissolves the Obligations of solemn Oaths, and makes Dispensations for Falshood and Cruelty; it has laid whole Nations in Blood and Confusion, destroyed Multitudes of innocent Lives, and attempted to propagate the Christian Religion, contrary to the very Nature of it, by just the same Methods by which the Mahometan Imposture was planted and supported in the *World*. And that this is no Fiction or Calumny, might easily be made to appear by many notorious Instances in former and later Times.

The following Discourses were deliver'd to a great Auditory, especially of
younger

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younger Persons, in a Catechetical Lecture in this City, in the Years 1713--14, when many Arts were used to disguise the Horror, and abate the Fear of Popery; and a Design was driving on to introduce a Popish Pretender, which has since more openly appeared in an unnatural Rebellion, and a perfidious Conspiracy, against the present Government; which has been settled by so many Laws of the Land, and administered with so much Wisdom and Lenity, and favour'd with the Indulgence of Heaven. It was then thought a seasonable Service, and was very useful to Many; and it has been the Opinion of several competent Judges, that considering them as a system of the principal Points of the Popish Religion, handled with good Judgment, and great Variety of Reasoning, with a due mixture of Entertainment, and especially rendered familiar and practical: They were capable of serving the Interests of Truth and Liberty among Mankind, and contributing to the
In-

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Instruction and Establishment of common Christians, for whose Use they were originally intended.

Concerning the Reverend Author, I shall not need to speak any thing in this Place, either of his moral Character, or his ministerial Furniture, of the Piety and Usefulness of his Life, or the value of his Memory to them who knew him, since that has been done elsewhere. I shall only further add, That as these Discourses had not the finishing of his last Hand, tho' exactly transcribed from his own Notes, and by his own Direction; so the candid Reader will make the Allowances due to posthumous Pieces, and which are only design'd for common Use. I heartily commend them to the Divine Blessing, and to the serious perusal of the Reader.

W. HARRIS.

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Heb. x. 23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, (for he is faithful that promised.)*



ERRATA.

P. 5. l. 1. *be*, read *the*. P. 5. l. ult. for *make up the true Church*, read *make a true part of the true Church*. P. 16. l. 2. *Perfections* dele s. P. 20. l. 7. dele only. Ibid. l. 16. for *unite*, read *unity*. P. 32. l. 14. for *wholy writtings*, read *holy writings*. P. 59. l. 14. instead of *such therefore*, read *such therefores*. P. 104. l. 5. from the bottom, for *and* read *an*. P. 118. l. 16. dele *as*. P. 149. l. 6. dele *fr*. P. 168. l. 4. at *last*, read *at least*. P. 173. l. 20. and the place, read *and they place*. P. 197. l. 18. dele *after death*, and read *death-threatening dissonants*.

S U B-

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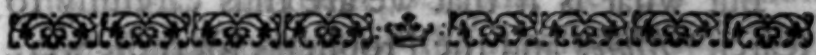
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DISCOURSE



DISCOURSE I.

The right of the people to read the
Scripture.



JOHN V. 39.

Search the Scriptures.



RIGHT is not more contrary to darkness, than this precept of our blessed Saviour is to the practice of the Romanish Church: He says search the Scriptures, That Church says search them not: He says we have eternal life in them, the Romanists say we shall be misled by them, we shall turn Hereticks if we pore too much on them, and then we know that, according to them, nothing remains for us but fire and faggot in this world, and eternal damnation in the next. B But

But we are willing, however, to obey our blessed Lord, and abide the event.

The word here translated, *search*, notes the utmost diligence, care, and circumspection, in our enquiry into any matter, and it implies that the thing we search into, is of weight and moment, and is worthy of our care, pains, and labour ; it imports an allusion to those who dig in mines for gold, silver, or jewels, or those who search diligently for something of great value which they have lost.

But what is it that we are thus carefully to search ? *Moses* and the Prophets ; for those were the Scriptures then in being, and they testify'd of Christ ; so that by them they might know that Jesus was the true Messiah : though the Church of that day, both ruling and representative, testified the contrary, and reviled and persecuted him as an impostor. Whence it is evident that it is not always safe to trust them who take upon them to be Church-guides, especially if they have a secular interest in view. In them ye think ye have eternal life, and Christ approves their thought : living oracles may be bribed ; but dead ones (which all books are) cannot ; if they are fairly and impartially consulted they will tell us the truth, especially if written by men of integrity, and they also under the influence of divine infallible inspiration. *And*

And what our Saviour says of the books that were then in being, we must suppose is to be applied to all that should afterwards make up the body of the sacred Canon, the Gospels, Acts, Epistles, and Revelation.

The *Doctrine* then is, That it is the unquestionable duty of all who have opportunity, to search the Scriptures.

(I need not tell you what I mean by Scriptures, viz. all that the Primitive Churches did, and the Reformed Churches now do receive as such, and no more; not the Apocrypha, not the Canons and Constitutions of the Apostles, &c. But I would not wander from my design and purpose, but lay things before you as concisely, and in as plain an order, as I can.

I. Every man ought to be of some Religion. This follows so plainly from the acknowledgment that God is God, and Man is Man, that it does not need, and is scarce capable, of any other or farther proof, if we understand the terms, the consequence is most clear.

II. Every man ought to be able to render a reason of the hope that is in him, and of the Religion that he professeth, 1 Pet.

iii. 3. And this may be done since we are reasonable creatures, and religion is our reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1.

III. Yet there are sundry Religions in the world (so called) of which no reason can be given, for as much as they are unreasonable. Such are all idolatrous Religions, all cruel persecuting ones, &c.

IV. The Christian Religion, if fairly represented (and not corrupted and adulterated) recommends it self to the reason and conscience of every impartial enquirer.

V. The rule and standar'd of Religion is the Holy Scriptures. There is no judging what it is, no comparing it with false and pretended Religions, but by them, *Isa. viii. 20. To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to that word, it is because there is no light in them.*

VI. It is plain (at first sight) that Paganism and Mahometanism, cannot be true Religions, or methods of God's appointing, for the salvation of lost sinners: for they are full of darkness, imposture, and cruelty.

VII. Judaism cannot now be the true Religion, because it supposeth the Messiah to come, when he is come already; it

acknowledgeth not he Christ of God. Before the coming of Christ it was the true Religion ; but all the types and Prophecies being fulfilled in him, it ceaseth and is become of none effect ; any further, than as the writings of the Jewish Church bear witness to our blessed Lord, and his saving design, and so they are of unspeakable use in and to the Christian Church.

VIII. It remaineth therefore, that the Christian be acknowledged for, and received as, the only true Religion.

IX. When differing, yea opposite, Churches, claim to be Christian, the Scripture still is to decide the controversy ; for there is no other umpire, that is divine, nor any other that can be supposed to be impartial.

X. They therefore that would know which is the true Church, must consult and keep to that rule.

XI. And by that rule it appears plainly that the Protestants are the true Christians, and make up the true Church.

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XI. And by that rule it appears plainly that the Protestants are the true Christians, and make up the true Church.

This we shall try and make evident to you (God willing) in various instances ; at present we are concerned with that which is the main foundation of all.

It is a sign the Popish Church is not the true Church, because she flies the test of the Scriptures, and will not be determined by them, nor will suffer her people to read and consult them, lest they should discover who and what she is, and so detest and forsake her ^a.

The Papists do wickedly take away the key of knowledge from the people, and (like the Pharisees of old) enter not into the kingdom of God themselves, nor suffer them that would, to enter in.

They have expressly debared the laity from the liberty of searching the Scriptures, make it death to have, much more to read, a Bible ; though they sometimes pretend that a licence may be obtained, yet when it comes to the trial, the very desiring of that favour, renders a man at least suspected of Heresy : and a learned man ^b of their own was sent to prison for presenting the Emperor, *Charles* the Vth. with a new Testament in *Spanish*.

I shall now briefly prove, against the Papists, that it is every man's duty, who has ca-

^a *One of the ancient, filius Hereticks, Scripturarum lucifugas. Tert. And by that rule, the Papists are the vilest, grossest, Hereticks in the world.*

^b *Franciscus Eucænis.*

capacity and opportunity, to get and read the Holy Scriptures, and that daily, diligently, and with conscientious care to understand, and profit by them.

1. Why else did God inspire holy men to write the Bible, if he did not intend that men should read, understand, and practice its Dictates?

Will any man write a letter to another, if he knows before hand, either that he will not read it, or that he cannot understand it, or would not be the better but the worse for it, or if he himself would not have him read it? And yet with such gross folly, and absurdity, do the Papists charge and reproach the infinitely wise and blessed God. There is no reason to be given why the Scriptures should at all have been written, if they may not be read; nor is there any reason why some should read them, that will not hold as well for others, yea for all.

2. God does plainly, expressly, strictly command us to search the Scriptures, and charge this as indispensable duty upon us, 1 *Thes.* v.

27. *I charge you by the Lord, that this Epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.*

Kings themselves were to write out the book of God's law, and read in it day and night, *Deut.* xvii. 18, 19.

The things that were written aforetime were written for our learning, Rom. v. 4.

But how can we learn, if we do not read, and that daily and diligently, weighing, considering, and pondering things as we go along, labouring to understand, endeavouring to feel the power of them upon our hearts, and setting our selves to practice them in our lives ?

3. The Scriptures are the unerring rule of our faith and life, and therefore we should read them, that we may know them, and know them, that we may do them, and do them, that we may be blessed in our deed, *James i. 22, 25. John xiii. 17. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.* Is this like the Papists, who promise men happiness though they neither know, nor do them ? If they believe as the Church believes, and receive absolution from a priest, all is safe (according to them) though they neither know what they are to believe, nor care what they do.

4. The high encomiums given the Scriptures, do strongly oblige us to the diligent search and study of them. Read carefully the *xix. and cxix. Psalms.*

The Bible is the best of books, a pearl of price, an enriching treasure, a light to guide us, a staff to support us, food to nourish us. Shall we then slight and neglect it ? God forbid.

5. The neglect of Scripture brings a curse upon the soul at present, and binds the everlasting curse, the wrath of God, upon the offending sinner for ever, *Deut. xxvii. 26. cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.*

Indeed in the Gospel there is relief from this curse, but not to the careless neglecters of it.

6. This was the chief privilege of the *Jewish* Church, *that to them were committed the oracles of God, Rom. iii. 1, 2.* they had a right to read and study the scriptures; and what, shall Christians be inferiour to the *Jews* in so important a privilege? Did Christ come as his pretended Vicar does, to take away our bibles from us? God forbid!

The privileges of believers are many ways enlarged, but no way abridged by the coming of Christ.

Having thus proved, that it is our birth-right as Christians to have leave, and our indispensable duty to maintain and improve our right to search the Scriptures, I shall a little consider what the Papists say against this doctrine and the practice founded upon it.

Obj. 1. They urge that of our blessed saviour, *Math. vii. 6. Give not that which is holy unto dogs, neither cast ye your Pearls before swine, i. e.* (according to the Romish
Rab-

Rabbi's, those learned and wise interpreters) Let not a Lay-man touch, much less, peruse a bible, at least not in any language he understands.

Harding, Hofius, and others, make this objection; but one would think they should be ashamed of it: The text speaks not of the Scriptures but as most understand it, of personal reproof, which is not to be given to those who will scornfully reject it, and revile and injure those who tender it.

Nor did ever any but foul-mouthed Jesuits, and their adherents, call the people in general, especially those who profess Christianity, Dogs and Swine: this is so inhumane, and so coarse, that any thing but a Papist would abhor the thought of it.

Read the apostle *Paul's* epistles, and you shall see he calls the Laity, to whom he writes, *Brethren, elect of God, faithful, the redeemed, precious, &c.* not dogs and swine. This haughtiness betrays the very spirit of Anti-Christ, and is most opposite to the tender love and generous kindness of the Redeemer.

Obj. 2. But the people, if they are trusted with Bibles, will pervert them, and wrest those holy books to their own destruction.

Ans. So indeed it is said, and it is not impossible, but in too many instances, so it may come to pass. But if that be a reason why the

the Laity should not read the Bible, it is a much stronger reason why the Clergy should not; and if neither Lay nor Clergy must read it, to what purpose was it written?

The Clergy have perverted the Scriptures more, and wrested them to much worse purposes, than ever the Laity did.

I would give you some instances, but that it is a reproach to human nature, and I think a sinful waste of time, but to enumerate such egregious trifles.

It were as wise to endeavour to take away the Sun out of the firmament, because some do evil by its light, or to forbid the sowing of corn, and making of bread, or the planting of vines, or brewing of strong liquors, because some surfeit of their food, and others drink away their reason.

In things necessary, the abuse is not to take away the use, whatever it be in things indifferent: but the use is to be continued, and the abuse to be rectify'd or remov'd.

Obj. 3. The reading of the scriptures makes men hereticks.

Ans. If this be not to blaspheme the Scriptures, and God the author of them, I know not what is. Sooner may the sun breed darkness, or the best prescriptions of the ablest Physicians produce discales, than the right knowledge and study of the holy scriptures, make any man an Heretick.

But

But indeed the Scriptures have made, and will always make, such as they call Hereticks, that is, sound Believers : For after the way that they call Heresy, so worship we the God of our fathers ; as the Apostle justly apologized for himself, and therein for us, long ago, *Acts* xxiv. 14.

Obj. 4. But the Papists are continually objecting the darkness and obscurity of the holy Scriptures ; they will but puzzle and confound ordinary men, and they do but labour in vain to understand them, and therefore it sufficeth plain unlearned men, to believe the Church, and trust their Doctors and Learned men.

Ans. I confess this were an easier way, if it were a safe one ; but who shall assure me that they are learned men, who pretend to be, and are cried up for such ? 2. And farther, Who shall undertake for their honesty, that they shall not for self-interest, mislead them who trust in them, and follow them, with an implicit faith ? 3. Christ hath bid us call no man lord or master upon earth, *Matt.* xxiii. 8, 9, 10. 4. Learned men have misled the ignorant, that trusted to them in every age, and no where more than in the Papacy. 5. An honest heart will better enable a man to understand the scripture, in things necessary to salvation, than the ablest head will do, where that is wanting. 6. Tho' some

some things in scripture are hard to be understood, it does not follow that all, or even the most material are so.

Therefore there can be no safety, but in seeing and judging for our selves, with diligence, humility, and earnest supplication for the holy spirit of God, to lead us into all saving truth.

The ring-leaders of sects and heresies have always, or at least, for the most part, been men of highest pretensions to secular learning.

Obj. 5. But your protestant Translations are full of mistakes, blunders, and dangerous errors.

Ans. This has been often said, but never proved. I defy any learned Papist to produce one protestant translation of the Bible that contains so many gross faults, and dangerous errors, as the vulgar Latin, which their Church (against sense and reason, and indeed with the most absurd and palpable nonsense, hath declared authentick, and so confined even their learned men to the use of it, at least so far as to be finally determined by it.

Obj. 6. But is it not absurd to translate the oracles of God into a barbarous language? for such they call all languages but the *Hebrew*, *Greek*, and *Latin*.

Ans. No language is to be esteemed barbarous, in which God's truth is plainly taught, and his praises acceptably set forth.

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Our tongue is our glory, and chiefly so as by it we praise the God who made us ; and God makes no difference of languages, whatever men do ; but accepts the sincere worshippers, in whatever tongue they speak to, and of him.

It is plain to all impartial inquirers into things, that the great reason why the Papists are so much against the Scriptures, is because they are so plainly against them : thus the guilty Criminal thinks and speaks hardly of his Judge.

They know they could never impose upon the credulity of mankind as they do, if the free use of their Bibles were once universally permitted to them. They darken the shop that they may put off their adulterate and corrupt wares the better.

Let me now conclude all with a word or two, by way of use.

1. Let us bless God that yet we have Bibles, and may read them as much as we will, and none disturb or make us afraid for so doing. May this be *Great Britain's* privilege and glory, as long as the sun and moon shall endure.

2. Let a just abhorrence of Popery seize and possess our spirits : We have just reason for it, if we had nothing else to object to it but this, That it will not let us hear our heavenly Father's voice, in a language that we

un-

understand ; that it debars us from consulting our Redeemer's Testament, and knowing what legacies he hath there bequeathed to us.

3. Be diligent in reading the Scriptures while you may, and labour to do it in a right manner, and unto spiritual profit. Let us get our Bibles into our heads and hearts, and copy them out into our lives and conversations, and then neither all the Papists on Earth, nor all the Devils in Hell, shall be able wholly to rob us of them ; but there will be fruit of them abiding, to our joyful account, in the day of Christ's appearance and coming.

Lastly, Bless God for Protestant Rulers ; pray much and earnestly to God for them ; live quietly and peaceably under them ; carry prudently and exemplarily in our several stations ; have the Protestant Succession (according to its present legal settlement) truly at heart ; pray to God to fasten it as a nail in a sure place, and strike through the loins of them that bear ill will to it. Entertain no thought of returning back into *Egypt*, or making our peace with an enraged enemy ; but with one heart, and one voice, let us from day to day, send up to Heaven the earnest cries of our concerned souls, from Popish Principles, Popish Practices, and Popish Rulers, *Good Lord deliver us and our posterity, throughout all generations. Amen and Amen*



DISCOURSE II.

Of the perfections of the Scripture.

2 THESS. ii. 15.

Therefore brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.

THE Apostle had in this chapter, been warning the *Thessalonians* of a great apostacy that was to overspread the face of the Christian Church, before the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ: and therefore, that it was not so near at hand, as many of the Christians of that time were ready to apprehend, he tells them, *verse 3.* there must first be a general falling away a grand apostacy, the man of sin, who is also the son of perdition, both actively and passively, must first be revealed, and that in order to his being destroyed, *verse 8.* And

And in this chapter we have many characters of the man of sin, which agree with those which other Scriptures give to the Anti-Christ, and fit no mortal so exactly as they do the Pope of *Rome*, or the papal Hierarchy.

In the text he exhorts them to constancy, in the profession of the truth, and a practice agreeable thereto, whatever it might cost them.

Therefore :] Because ye are chosen and called of God, and have great advantages to discern truth from error which others have not.

Stand fast :] Abide firm in your station and work, fear not, shrink not, draw not back; but go on as you have begun, continuing faithful to the death, though seducers wheedle you, and tyrants persecute you. Sufferings in a good cause will not turn to your final damage, but to your exceeding benefit and advantage.

And then as a help to this, he exhorts them to hold fast the traditions which they had been taught, whether by word or epistle, by preaching or writing. The traditions he speaks of, contained the doctrine of the Gospel, not any thing different from, much less opposite thereunto; for he himself pronounces them accursed, who teach any other doctrine, *Gal.* vi. 16.

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And then for the manner in which they had been taught them, it was twofold, by preaching with the lively voice; and by writing; the former was first, but the latter was necessary, for the tradition could never have been kept entire and uncorrupt throughout so many generations, if it had not first been committed to writing.

Doctrine. That if we will stand fast, and persevere in Christian Religion, we must hold fast the Doctrine deliver'd by Christ and his apostles, whether by word or writing.

And here 1. It is the Christian doctrine, that we are to stand fast in. This is evidently meant by the Traditions here spoken of, and the same name is also given to it elsewhere. Thus the apostle tells the *Corinthians*, that he delivered unto them, that which he received, or the tradition, 1 *Cor.* xv. 3. and the Christian Religion is often called among the antients, by the name of a tradition, or emphatically the tradition.

2. The Christian Religion, as deliver'd in the Holy Scriptures is the whole of that doctrine which is according to godliness, it contains all that is necessary to be believed by us, in order to salvation, *Rom.* i. 16. the Gospel of Christ, is the power unto salvation, to every one that believeth. He

He that truly believeth the Gospel believeth enough, and needs no more (if he believe it practically) to his comfort in this world or his happiness in the next.

3. They who rest not in this, but require more, are for a larger rule of faith; betray great injudiciousness, or prejudice, or self-seeking.

Much more they that make us a rule of faith; ten times as big as that which God has given us, and that is capable of daily growing bigger, and that can neither be understood, nor limited, as is the case with the *Romish* traditions.

The great objection (forsooth) against the Scriptures; is that they are hard to be understood; and Lay-men cannot know the meaning of them: but are the decrees of Popes, the Canons of Councils, the decisions of the present Church; sooner come at, easier to understand, or to remember and practice.

One would think their objections against us, and their pleas for themselves, are such as a reasonable man could not reflect upon without blushing.

4. We do not pretend that the Scriptures contain a full and particular account, of all that Christ and his apostles said and did, while they were here on earth, this were needless, useless, and impossible; the apostle *John* tells us; that on that supposition, the whole world

itself would not be able to contain the books that should be written, *John* xxi. 25. But there is enough written to engage our faith, and guide our practice, and encourage our hope, and what need we more; they that offer us a larger faith, do not offer us a better, but only only by adding to his words, come to be found liars, *Prov.* xxx. 6.

5. The Romanists often urge us to produce the proofs of all the particulars of our faith, out of our rule of faith, the written word of God, and that say they, not by syllogisms and consequences of reasoning and arguing, but in express syllables, and affirmative propositions; prove, say they, that you Protestants are the true Church, that in the unite of the divine nature, there is a Trinity of Persons, that the death of Christ, was a proper satisfaction for the sins of man; where do you find the words, Protestant Trinity, and Satisfaction in the Bible?

This may amuse an ignorant man, but cannot stagger a wise and impartial considerer: therefore, I say, we are men before we are Christians; God has written the Bible for rational creatures, who it is supposed will use their reason, especially where their all for eternity, is at stake.

And therefore we are to read the Bible as we do other books, with a design to understand the author's meaning, and to be inform'd

form'd by, and better'd for what we read ; and if we do so, with humility and prayer, for divine direction and assistance, we shall, in reading the Holy Scriptures, be led into, and confirmed in all saving truth.

There is no need that every article of faith should, in so many letters and syllables, be affirmed in Scripture, it is enough, that by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, searching the Scriptures, using our reason, and imploring and relying on, and yielding to, the assistances of the divine Spirit, we may come to know what the mind of God in these things is, so far as is needful for our present state and condition.

The Bible is not a scholastick system, but a plain and familiar instruction, and therefore not filled with terms of art, and rules of method, but accommodated to the capacity of plain readers, and willing learners.

If when learned adversaries arise, learned men have thought fit to oppose them, and overcome them too, with their own weapons, yet that makes not such terms necessary ; he that holds the Scripture truths, as they are deliver'd in Scripture terms, and lives accordingly, shall be saved, and then the end of the Scripture revelation is attained ; and if the knowledge of other things be fit or conducing to our happiness in the world of glory, we shall have it there.

6. But did not the Church subsist a long while without a written word, even from *Adam* to *Moses*, and why should writing be more necessary now, than it was then?

Ans. It is unfit for us to ask such a question: God has seen fit to write his word for our use, and we ought to acquiesce in it, with all humility and thankfulness.

But however, there are visible reasons for God's changing his method of conveying his will to mankind, from that of oral tradition into a written law. For formerly the lives of men were much longer than they are now, the Church was not spread into so great a compass, as it has been since, deceivers were not so many, cunning, powerful, and industrious, as in these latter times.

7. But ought not oral traditions to be received with like pious affection, and awful reverence as the written word.

Ans. Yes, if there be like evidence, that they are from God, and that we are not imposed upon with human traditions, instead of divine ones; but if that be the case (as it really is, in reference to the traditions controverted between us and the Papists) it is the grossest blasphemy to assert (as the Council of *Trent* does) that their traditions are to be received with like pious affection and reverence, as the well-attested oracles of God.

This is to blaspheme God, and overthrow the faith of man, and introduce an utter scepticism and uncertainty into all Religion. We can as evidently prove many of their traditions to be false, as we can prove the Christian Religion to be true, what kind of friends then are they to Christianity, who put such weapons as these into the hands of its enemies, and care not though they make men Atheists, so they can but make them proselytes to *Rome*?

8. Neither do we deny all tradition, we know the use and necessity of it, in proving the facts on which Christian Religion is grounded.

Historical tradition, that bears good evidence of its genuineness, is exceeding valuable, and we wish we had more of it, and more fully attested; but what is that to supplemental traditions, which must furnish us with a new faith, that is so monstrously growing, that we can never know when we are come to the end of it?

I shall therefore now briefly vindicate the perfection and sufficiency of Scripture, to its great end of being the standing perpetual rule of faith, without the addition of human traditions (such as the Papists would palm upon us, and nail us down to) this has been so often and fully done by our Protestant Divines, and particularly by the late

learned Arch-bishop *Tillotson*, that I shall need but to hint the following particulars.

1. If you will consult that known text, 2 *Tim.* iii. 15, 16, 17. you will find it full to the point before us.

1. It is said the Scriptures were able to make *Timothy* wise unto salvation; it is not said, Scripture and tradition is able to make thee wise unto salvation; but Scripture alone, and by itself, and if it was sufficient to make him wise unto salvation, it must be of like sufficiency to any other man, that will study it diligently and impartially as he did.

2. It contains the doctrine and motives of faith in Christ Jesus, and therefore it must be sufficient to salvation, for by Faith we are saved, or, *by Grace, through Faith, and that not of ourselves, it is the gift of God*, Eph. ii. 8.

3. All Scripture is given by inspiration of God; it must then be fully suited to attain its end.

The Papists say, the *Trent* Canons and Catechism, contain all things necessary to salvation, and will they not allow that to the true inspirations of the Holy Ghost, which they do to the writings of a pack'd Conventicle, of which it was shrewdly said, that the Holy Ghost was brought unto it every now and then, in a cloak bag from the Conclave at *Rome*?

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4. The Text says expressly, they are profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that which is profitable for all these purposes, must needs be sufficient to salvation.

5. They are able to make the man of God perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good works; and if they are sufficient for the Clergy, they must needs be so for the Laity, for no man pretends that greater measures of knowledge are necessary for the people, than for the pastors by whom they are to be instructed.

2. We are forbid to add to the word of God, and an angel is to be accounted cursed, if he preach any other doctrine, than that which is therein contain'd, *Deut. iv. 2. Gal. i. 8.* Surely they had need bring good credentials along with them, that would bind so many new doctrines upon the faith of Christians, as the Papist's oral traditions contain; most of their new tenets being as contrary to the preaching and writings of Christ and his apostles, as darkness is to light. Christ says, call no man lord or master upon earth; the Papists say, let every soul be subject to the Pope of *Rome*, even princes themselves, and they call him, our Lord God the Pope.

Christ says, if any man break one of these least Commandments, he shall be called
least

least in the kingdom of Heaven: *Bellarmino* says, if the Pope put virtue for vice, and sin for duty, we are bound to believe and obey him, or we sin against conscience.

Christ hath instituted a Sacrament, the Pope hath turned it into an unbloody sacrifice.

Christ says, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve. No, says the Pope, ye shall worship images, the Virgin *Mary*, the Host, &c.

The apostle teacheth us, that there is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. No, say the Papists, there are many mediators, Angels, the Virgin *Mary*, and a whole troop of he and she Saints, that no body knows whence they came, or whither they are gone; but I shall name no more of these at present, these few may serve as a tast of the rest, for they are all of the same sort as this sample.

3. The properties of the Holy Scriptures, shew their perfection and sufficiency, they are perfect, sure, wise, right, true, &c. *Psalms* xix. 7, 8.

Whether then shall we believe, God himself, or the Council of *Trent*? Can there be any question about this? The reproachful names to Holy Scripture, by the Papists, is enough to satisfy any honest man, on which side the truth lies in this matter. They call it a doubtful oracle,

a leaden rule, a nose of wax, and tell us, but for the testimony of the Church, it would be of no more authority than *Aesop's Fables*.

4. The Scriptures were written for this very end, that they might be to us a rule of faith, a sufficient means of salvation; they contain the covenant of God's Grace, and the last will and testament of our Redeemer, and after all, must they be charged with imperfection and insufficiency? What sophistry, what blasphemy is this!

Can men do that which God cannot. *viz.* give us a sufficient rule for our faith and life? Can they speak plainer than he? Or are they wiser than the God who made them? Or are they kinder or more faithful? Some or all of these must follow, if God had left it to the Church of *Rome*, to fix the rule and measure of faith and practice for all the other Churches in the world.

5. God abhors, and has vehemently declared his abhorrence of mens traditions, when opposed or added to his commandments, *Isa. xxix. 13.*

They must have the impudence of the scarlet Whore, and have forgot to blush, who can defend themselves in, and even boast of such practices, and compel others to a compliance with them therein by fire, and sword.

6. The characters of the Romish traditions betray their want of just authority, and show them

them not fit to be made a part of our rule.

They are obscure, numerous, trifling, burthenfome, modern many of them, and no ways fitted to promote practical piety, but to nurse men in ignorance, and harden them in security. What is the chaff to the wheat? The Scripture traditions and the Romish ones, differ as much as chaff and wheat, darkness and light, counterfeit coin and true.

As to their boasts of the fathers and all antiquity being for them, it has been over and over confuted by our learned Protestant writers, and it is not fit to cumber an exercise of this nature, with quotations of that kind. Yet give me leave to mention three or four passages, by which you may know how to judge of the rest.

I adore, says *Tertullian*, the fullness of the Scriptures; let *Hermogenes*, says he, show us, that what he asserts, is written, or else let him own that Wo that is pronounced against them who add to the word of God, *Herm. c. 21.*

St. *Jerom*, on *Matt. xxiii.* tells us, that whatsoever is not taught in the Scriptures, is, and ought to be rejected, with the same ease and unconcernedness as it is asserted.

Austin is express in his book of Christian doctrine, book 2. chap. 29. in the things plainly taught us, in the Scriptures all things are found, which respect our faith and duty. And
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another Father (*Basil*) tells us, that it is a proof of Infidelity, and a sign of pride, to deny what is written, or to introduce what is not written. Can any thing be plainer than these, and innumerable other passages, that might be produced out of the Fathers, are against the present Church of *Rome*?

I have partly prevented my self as to answering their objections, in the former part of this discourse, yet I shall mention one or two.

Obj. 1. But how can you know that the Bible is the word of God, or that the books you have are canonical but by tradition?

Ans. We know the Bible to be the word of God, by the divine impress upon it, its attributes and characters, and by the saving work of it upon the souls of men in all ages: and we know which books are cononical, not by the private tradition of the Church of *Rome*, but by the universal tradition of all times; not only all the Churches, but the enemies of christianity it self, allowing the books we have to have been written by those inspired Authors whose names they bear.

We have the same, or greater, certainty of this, as we have that the books of *Livy* and *Cicero*, were writ by them; or that our Acts of Parliament are what they pretend to be; or that such a man as *Henry* the VIIIth, was once King of *England*; or that there are now
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any such places as *Rome* or *Constantinople* : and he that should deny or doubt any of these, would not be thought to be well in his wits.

Obj. 2. But if the Scripture be sufficient, yea perfect, What need of Ministers, or of the internal influences of the Spirit?

Ans. You might as well ask, If a man have bread, what needs he light, or cloaths, or a bed to lye on? Bread is the staff of life; but it is not sufficient to preserve life, if other things necessary be wanting.

The Scriptures are sufficient as a rule, and yet there may be a necessity of some to explain them to us, and press them further upon us; and there will always be a need of the Spirit's help, without which we cannot profit by them; but these are no additions to them, as a rule, as *Romish* traditions are.

Obj. 3. But there are many dangerous and damnable Heresies, which the Scripture saith nothing of, and therefore they are not sufficient to arm us against them.

Ans. Yes, they are, since the discovery of truth, is at once the discovery of error, and a warning against our being seduced by it.

If negatives were not to be included in their correlative positives, the bulk and confusion of the holy writings, would have render'd them useless, and quite have destroyed the end of writing; but however, the *Romish* errors are
not

not passed by in silence, in the Epistles to the *Romans* and *Galatians*, the second to the *Thessalonians*, and the Revelation of St. *John*. Mystery *Babylon* hath her name, number and character in that blessed book, and all are warned to come out from her, and be separate.

Use. 1. Prize and be thankful for the Holy Scriptures, and stick to them, as a perfect rule of faith and good life.

2. Value a truly Gospel Ministry, who are not, pretend not to be, lords of your faith; but helpers of your holiness, peace, and joy.

3. Take heed of a Spirit of Enthusiasm. Admit no private Spirit in things different from, much more opposite to, your standing rule.

4. Abhor the papal spirit of tyranny and imposition, and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free, that you be not again entangled in the yoke of bondage, *Gal. v. 1.*

5. See and acknowledge with thankfulness, the safety of your present Religion and communion, as Protestant, and continue firm in it, without listening to the wiles, or valuing the threatnings of those, who being made drunk with the cup of the wine of the fornication of the *Romish* scarlet Whore, would make you so too. Come forth out of *Babylon*, for though she set as a Queen, her plagues are at hand, and they that pledge her in the one, must do it in the other also.

DIS-

DISCOURSE III.

The authority and credibility of the
Scriptures.

EPHES. ii. 20.

*And are built upon the foundation of
the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus
Christ himself being the cheif corner
stone.*

 Shall from these words briefly consider, the controversy we have with the Papists, about the authority and credibility of the Scriptures; or the grounds and motives on which we receive the wholly writings as divine; and so acknowledge them to be (what we have already shown you they are) the only sufficient rule of our faith and life, and the spring of our hope and consolation, and that for eternity.

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The Apostle is here showing the great privileges of the Christian Church, and the sound members of it; they are no more aliens and foreigners (as all of us by nature are, *verse 3*, and *12.*) but fellow citizens with the Saints, and of the household and family of God.

And here he shows on what foundation the true Church (which is constituted, such by its faith) is built, and that is on the Apostles and Prophets, that is, their preaching and writings, all which do testify of, and lead to Jesus Christ; who is the cheif corner stone, that holds all the building together.

Thus the true Church is built upon the living rock Christ Jesus, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, *Math. xvi. 18.*

It is not built on the sand of human traditions, or grounded on the frail bottom of human fallible authority, Fathers, Popes, Counsels; but on Christ himself, the wisdom of the Father, who lay in his bosom from eternity, and came in time to reveal his counsels to us: and on the Prophets and Apostles who were taught of God, and inspired by the spirit of Jesus, and gave full proof that they were so, that our faith might not stand in the word or wisdom of man; but in the power (*1 Cor. ii. 5.*) of God.

The point then to be spoken to, is that we do not receive the Scriptures, and the truths contained in them, on the authority of the

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Church

Church (of any man, or body of men) but on the authority of God only; who in them speaks to us by his holy spirit.

1. We do therefore in the first place assert, that the formal reason, why we assent unto the Scriptures, as the word of God, is the authority of God himself, speaking in and by them to our hearts and consciences, so as none but he himself could speak so clearly, so convincingly, so powerfully, and effectually; the divine energy, that accompanies the holy writings, is that by which they are distinguished from all others, and whereby they carry their own evidence along with them; so that the experienced saint may say of them, as the blind man in the Gospel did of Christ himself, *John ix. 30.* Why herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, yet he open'd mine eyes.

.2 Let us therefore observe, that we could not so much as know that there is a Church, or what a Church is, or which is the true Church, but for the Scriptures: therefore to make the Scriptures depend for their credibility upon the authority of the Church; is as if we should say, that the sun depends upon the rays for its light, or that the effect is in order of nature, or time before its cause, than which nothing can be more foolish and ridiculous.

3. It is very plain, that the Papists are forc'd to run themselves upon this absurdity, in order to the sheltering themselves from a conviction by reason and Scripture of their many and gross errors; therefore they cry up the Church, that is themselves, that they may be both parties and judges in their own cause; they dare not stand a free and impartial trial, which is always a sign of a bad cause, and a worse mind.

4. The Papists do not all of them speak in the same rude and reflecting manner of the Scriptures, and ridicule, and condemn their authority, as some of them do; some (especially of the modern Papists) speak more mildly, and in softer language than their predecessors, were won't to do, being willing to shun the odium of such blasphemy as they are guilty of, who set them upon an even level with profane historians; yea with *Æsop's* Fables, and call them a nose of wax, and a leaden rule, and the like.

5. They who speak most cautiously, do yet resolve their authority, and our faith of them, into the testimony of the Church.

They say indeed, that the Scriptures have an authority in themselves; but as to us they have none, but what the Church gives them; but this is meer trifling and cheat.

For the very notion of authority is relative, and can be meant no otherwise, than in

relation to those, over whom the thing, or person spoken of, is supposed to have authority: an authority in it self, as opposed to an authority over us, is no authority; and so they make a noise, and cast a mist before weak eyes, with an absurd distinction, without any difference.

6. The Scriptures do bear upon them such distinguishing marks and characters of divine authority, as must satisfy any impartial unprejudic'd mind; that they are indeed the very word of the only true and living God revealed, and made known to the sons of men, for their guidance into, and preservation in, the way of life and salvation: such is the inimitable majesty of their stile, holiness of their doctrine, harmony of their parts; consent in their scope and design, the sublimity of the mysteries taught in them; the characters of the writers, with many others.

It is from these, and the like impressions upon them, that we do certainly know their original; and not from an adventitious human testimony.

7. We deny not the usefulness (and ordinarily speaking the necessity) of human testimony, as a means of conveying the Scriptures to us, and so giving us the opportunity of knowing that there are such books, and what they contain, and thereby discerning in them, the marks and characters of their divine Original.

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But then this is only introductive, not authoritative: these books would have been no less divine, though we had known nothing of them; as alas a great part of mankind do not! and we acknowledge it as an unspeakable mercy, that we were born within the pale, and bred up in the bosom of the visible Church; that we had parents, who early put Bibles into our hands, and taught us out of them; that we have ministers to explain them to us, and press them with warmth and seriousness upon our hearts and consciences: but this gives them not their weight and authority with us; though these, and the like means, are happily recomendatory of them to us.

Besides this is not wholly the testimony of any one particular Church, but of the Church universal, and in part too, of enemies and adversaries.

8. If we have no higher evidence of their divine authority, our faith of them could be only a human, and not a divine, and so not a saving faith. If we only believe on account of the sayings of frail and fallible men; our faith must needs be weak and fallible: for the streams can rise no higher than the fountain from which they flow, and the child will resemble the parent, whose offspring it is; an human faith may be useful, to make way for a divine one, but it must needs be very dangerous to rest in.

It is enough to make one tremble, to think how many among us rest in this: the Scripture Religion, was the Religion of their parents; is the Religion of their country, and therefore they abide in it, but are not able to render a reason of the hope that is in them: such protestants may soon be papists, and its likely will not be long otherwise; if persecution for the Gospel, the faith once delivered to the Saints, should again arise; the fiery trial would soon make the love of many wax cold, and when iniquity abounds (as it does among us at this day) we have no reason to think that tryal is far off; nay it may be even at the door.

Having premised these things, I now come to lay before you the reasons of our main assertion, that the Scriptures do not depend on the authority of the Church, but the Church on the Scriptures.

I. And the first shall be that of my text, we are built on the foundation of the Prophets and the Apostles, therefore not on the Church.

For in the Papists way of arguing, if we are asked, why we believe the Church to be a true Church, we must answer, because the Scriptures tell us so, and if we are asked, why we believe the Scriptures to be true, we must answer because the Church tells us so.

An argument, which some of the learned Doctors of the Church of *Rome* commend, and applaud, as strong and cogent enough to put the devil himself to flight.

But I believe such reasonings, do as little fright or hurt the evil spirit, as the Churches holy water, which they pretend he is mightily afraid of; but sure at most he does but counterfeit a dread of those superstitious devices, which fill his territories with murder'd souls; which he may be suppos'd to do, in order to the keeping his captives faster in his toils.

2. On the Romanists supposition, the authority of men would be greater than the authority of God, which is downright nonsense and blasphemy; if the word of man be more authentick than the word of God, then man must be greater than God, and no wonder they think and say so, who stile the old man at *Rome* their Lord God the Pope, as some of their *Rabbi's* have done.

3. The Papists when they tell us, we must believe the Scriptures on the authority of the Church, cannot, or will not, or dare not, tell us, who, what, or where the Church is: so that if we were willing to believe on her authority, we are never the nearer, unless we could tell where to find her.

We must believe on the authority of the Church; but ask them, What Church? They

are not agreed; in general indeed it is the Church of *Rome* (I no doubt, or else their game were up, their traffick were at an end) but come to particulars they know not; but dispute it hotly among themselves, whether it be a Pope or a Councel, or both conjunct, that is, the Church: it may be according to some of them, a wicked Pope, a Blasphemer, a Heretick, a Conjuror, a Sodomite, (for such they have had, if some of their most learned and credible writers are to be believed). They cannot tell us, whether it be the antient, or the present Church, on whose authority we are to believe; though most of them (for very evident reasons) are for the latter.

Whether this prerogative belong to the universal Church, or a particular one is not very plain in their doctors, only they have found out a shrewd artifice to make it both, by calling their particular Church of *Rome*, catholick; as if they should call the meanest part the whole house.

Sometimes they will have it the Church collective, and sometimes the Church representative; and they who are for the latter, some of them mean the whole body of the Romish clergy, others the bishops governing the Church by communicative letters; others the bishops and priests met in a general councel; others the Pope with his college of cardinals about him, and others the Pope alone;

alone : and so the Catholick Church is dwindled by representation into a single person, and he oftentimes one of the worst of men.

He must be weary of a reasonable faith, who can swallow so absurd a one as this is.

4. It is impossible a divine and certain faith should be bottom'd on an human and fallible authority, as soon may grapes grow on thorns, or figs on thistles. If I believe the Scriptures to be inspired, and infallibly true, only, because the Pope or a council tells me so; this is certainly but an human faith, can never be certain, nor saving; but we have hinted at this before.

5. From the nature of the Holy Scripture, it is the law of God, the supreme law giver : now no law derives its authority from the herald that publisheth it; but from the sovereign who enacts it: the Church is but the instrument of its promulgation, it is God's law, though the Church declare, and make it manifest; therefore its authority, and our faith, must depend on God, and not on man.

Further, the Scripture is the last Will and Testament of our dying Lord and Redeemer, wherein he hath left the best of legacies, pardon of sin, the gift of the spirit, right and title to eternal life, to all that believe on him: now though the Church may have the keeping

ing of this will, and her ministers, if faithful, will open the seals and read it to us; yet it derives all its vertue, force, and authority, from the testator himself, who is the alone author of it, and can alone confer the blessings promised in it. If the Church indeed could pardon sins and give the spirit, and the Pope had really the Keys to open and shut Heaven, to admit in, and shut out whom he would, there were some sense in the papal pretensions: but these are works too high for any mortal, and he who lays claim to them, does but cheat the people of their souls, and (so much as in him lies) rob the Redeemer of the purchase of his blood: an affront, which will one day be severely resented, and avenged before all the world.

Again, The Scriptures are the rule of our faith, and no man hath authority to make us a rule, or to give efficacy to it, but he that is Lord of our faith. We betray the just rights of our Saviour, and side with open rebels against him, if we call any man Master or Lord upon earth, but Jesus only, *Matt. xxiii. 8, 10.*

6. The Scripture is a first principle in Christianity, and therefore must be self-evident, and have no prior principle on which to rest, and from which it derives its strength and convictive evidence, as it must have on the

Papists

Papists supposition : but I would not be mistaken here, it is not so a first principle, as absolutely to be capable of no proof, or demonstration, *a priori*.

For it may be sufficiently made out to a Heathen or Infidel ; but among Christians it ought to be taken for the very first principle, peculiarly Christian, on which all the particular doctrines are bottom'd, and from which they all flow. And therefore, to set the Church's authority before them, is to thrust them out of their place, and level them with their inferiours ; and indeed, overturn the whole frame of the Christian Church, and of Christianity.

For we can know nothing more in Christianity 'till we have agreed this first, that the Scriptures are the word of God ; for till then we cannot so much as know, whether Christ hath any Church at all upon earth, or not.

7. Consider to what things the Spirit of God compares the Scriptures, and we shall find they are all such as argue its self-evidence ; as light, honey, sweet ointments. Now how will you know any of these but by themselves ? For they are objects of sense, and discover themselves immediately by their innate properties. Thus the Scripture is seen by its own light, and therein we taste that the Lord is gracious, and the favour of the Redeemer's sweet ointment therein
dis-

discovered, engages us, with firmness, to adhere to him as, our best friend, our most generous benefactor.

8. And, lastly, the Papists themselves (when out of the heat of dispute, or engaged with adversaries of another sort) freely grant us what we demand in this controversy ; tho' (like all unfair dealers) what they give with the one hand, they presently take with the other. Any man that will be at the pains to read *Bellarmino's* first book of his controversies (which is against Fanatical Enthusiasts, who set up their own private spirit against the authority of the Scriptures) will be easily and fully convinced of this.

To what has been said, the Papists object as follows.

Obj. 1. They say, the Church was before the Scripture; from *Adam* to *Moses* there was no written rule; and therefore, Why may it not be so still?

Ans. 1. The doctrine of the Scripture was before the Church, and the manner of conveying that doctrine, by word or writing, is but a circumstance which does not at all influence the matter in dispute, between us and the Church of *Rome*; the word of God received not its authority from those, thro' whose hands it was conveyed then, any more than it does now.

2. The length of the Patriarchs lives admitted

mitted of that manner of conveyance then, which would be very hazardous and unsafe, if not impossible, now.

3. The wisdom of God has chosen the way of writing as best, for transmitting his sacred truths down from one generation to another ; and since he has done so, we owe him that deference as to acquiesce in it, and not think any other way would have been better, much less to attempt the altering it, by adding supplemental traditions to, and setting up the authority of man against them.

Obj. 2. But how can we tell which books are canonical, and which apocriphal, but by the direction of the Church ?

Ans. Those which have been generally receiv'd, we acknowledge for canonical ; but not merely because they have been generally received, but because they agree with the rest, and bear upon them, the same Characters of a divine spirit, as the others do.

Obj. 3. But do not many still doubt of the divine authority, and inspiration of the Scriptures ?

Ans. It is too plain they do, but their infidelity is not to be cured, by transferring them to the authority of the Church, which they regard not ; but by convincing them, that their blindness is wilful, and the effect of their lusts and passions ; their sloth
and

and sensuality ; their pride and ambition ; their covetousness and earthly mindedness : men never hate the light but when their deeds are evil, *John* iii. 19, 20.

Obj. 4. But is not the Church the pillar and ground of truth and expressly so called ? *1 Tim.* iii. 15.

Ans. 1. This need not be granted, for it is with equal probability reckoned, that the Apostle there calls *Timothy* a pillar, and ground of truth, as that he calls the Church so.

2. But if otherwise, the Church may be called a pillar and ground of truth, in a much other sense than the Papists interpret that expression.

The allusion not being to the foundation of a building ; but to those pillars on which the publick edicts were hung, to be seen and read of all men, whereby they were promulgated, that they might be better known and observed.

And so it is now, the duty of the Church and its privilege, to be as such pillars, to preserve the oracles of God, to publish them to others, to vindicate them, and prevent the obtrusion of false and spurious writings, under the notion of divine and genuine ones, and to interpret and give the sense of Scripture ; but this not magisterially, and by way of force and compulsion ;

on; but ministerially, by the way of convincing evidence, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual, and interpreting Scripture by Scripture, the harder by the plainer texts, and the fewer by the more numerous.

Obj. 5. But does not *Austin* say, I should not have believed the Scriptures, if I had not been moved thereunto by the authority of the Church?

Ans. 1. Be it so; *Austin* was a learned and a good man, but he was not infallible.

2. He may be understood there, to speak of the Church as an introductive help to him, and not as if he rested wholly and solely on her authority.

3. The plain and true answer is, he speaks of himself during the time he was a manichean Heretick; but he had other notions of the matter after he became a convert to the Catholick Faith, and therefore this passage (with the sound whereof they are so exceedingly charmed) makes much more against the Papists than for them.

I now come to conclude, with a word or two, by way of use.

1. How thankful ought we to be that we live in a protestant nation, where we may see with our own eyes, and judge for ourselves, and not be led blindfold by Popes and councils to perdition?

2. How

2. How should we prize the Holy Scriptures, and adhere to them as the perfect rule of our faith and life, without calling any man, or body of men, Lord or Master, upon earth?

3. See that our faith, of Scripture, be divine, and not merely human: and that we can give a reason of it.

4. In our reading of Scripture carefully, note the marks it contains of a divine authority.

Lastly, Beg of God his holy spirit, to lead us into all saving truth, and quench not his influences by living in any wilful sin, least God let loose Papists upon us, and send us strong delusion to believe a lye.



D I S-



DISCOURSE IV.

Of the infalibility of the Church of Rome, and the judge of controversy.

I. JOHN iv. 1.

Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits, whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world.



HERE are but two ways of coming to the knowledge of any thing we would be acquainted with, the way of reason, and argument (supposing the necessary informations of sense) and the way of authority, which latter is human or divine.

What we see, and hear, and feel, and smell and tast, we reckon ourselves certain of, and must do so, unless we will rashly

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and groundlessly conclude, that God hath made all men in vain, *Pſalm lxxxix. 47.*

From the information of ſenſe, reaſon in its juſt exerciſe, draws forth many concluſions of great weight and importance, in matters of ſcience, trade, policy, and religion ; and if we are duly ſlow in yielding our aſſent, and cautious not to pronounce before we are ſure on good evidence (which the longer it is weighed, will ſtill appear more weighty) we can hardly be deceived, for the ſpirit, or underſtanding of man, is the candle of the Lord, *Prov. xx. 27.*

The way of authority is, generally ſpeaking, exceeding doubtful : human authority is always fallible, unleſs in caſes wherein the concurrence of natural cauſes leaves it almoſt impoſſible for men to lye, becauſe there is nothing to induce them ſo to do.

Divine testimony is not only equal, but ſuperiour to that of ſenſe and reaſon, provided we are ſure it is ſuch ; but that we cannot be without the previous uſe of our ſenſe and reaſon.

We are men before we are chriſtians, and God deals with us as men, that is, reaſonable creatures ; therefore, he would have us take nothing upon truſt, but prove all things, that we may hold faſt that which is good,
1 Theſſ. v. 21.

How

How different herein is our God and Redeemer from the Church of *Rome*, which will allow us no tryal, but will have us take all upon trust from it.

The Apostle *John* here directs us to try the Spirits, that is, try the Persons who pretend to extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, whether they can make good their claim.

Not believe them rashly, or (as we say) hand over head. If a man vaunts himself divinely inspired, let him be a Mahometan, or a Papist, or what he will; try whether he can make good his pretensions before you believe, or suffer your selves to be led blindfold by him.

Is what he says worthy of God? Is he himself a credible person, of sound mind and good conversation? If he pretend to new Revelations, are his pretensions back'd with miracles? If to prophecy; does the event confirm his sayings? Do his assertions contradict no former certainly attested divine Revelation? Does his Doctrine promote, or hinder holiness of heart and life? Is he not given to vain glory or self-seeking? For there are many false Prophets gone out into the world, and by their fruits ye shall know them, *Matt. vii. 20.*

The point I would speak to is,

That no man, or body of men, has any right to our implicit faith (and therefore not the Pope or a Council) but we ought to try

the Spirits, and not to take him for infallible, who says he is, till we know whether he be or no.

The Papists say their Church is infallible, and we cannot be Christians and be saved, unless we take all that she says for truth upon her own word, because of the said supposed infallibility.

But how shall this be known? The Apostle *John* bids us try, and that is the business of the present exercise.

1. Nothing can be of greater importance to us, in order to salvation, than the right decision of this question. If the Church be infallible, and the Church of *Rome* be that Church, and the Pope be the Church of *Rome*, and every Priest be the true infallible interpreter of the Pope's mind, to those he converseth with, we have nothing to do, but ask the Priest his thoughts, and all controversy is at an end, all duties are resolved, and at once all is plain, and clear as heart can wish: but, I doubt, this is too easy a way to Heaven, to be the true one; if the case stood thus, our Saviour would hardly have said, *Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to life, and few there be that find it*, Matt. vii. 14.

But the study of the Scriptures, and sincere desires, and endeavours, to find out the mind and will of God in them, is a harder

der work than so, though necessary, and not impossible.

2. The Papists will not admit the Scriptures to decide in matters of faith and salvation, because they fear their sentence; they are of the same mind in regard of them, as *Abab* was concerning *Micajah*; *I hate him, for he doth not prophecy good concerning me but evil,* 1 Kings xxii. 8. No wonder the Papists are against the Scriptures, because the Scriptures are so plainly against them.

3. We do not deny the Church (rightly understood) to have an authority in matters of faith. But 1. We deny the Pope, or a Council, or the Clergy, only to be the whole Church. 2. We deny that the Church can prescribe to our faith, besides, beyond, or against the Scriptures, which we are sure are the word of God, and agreeable to his will, and which we cannot be alike sure the decrees of Popes, or Councils, or the dictates of every parish Priest (how ignorant, or sottish soever) are. 3. But the true Church hath power authoritatively to recommend (tho' not by corporal penalties to enforce, which she has nothing to do with) the doctrines and commands of God, and Christ, on those within her pale, and who are of her communion; this right belongs to the universal Church, and to every true particular Church.

The Church's authority, is but ministerial and directive; not absolute, much less compulsive, by methods of violence, corporal punishment, and calling in the force of the secular arm; whatever Church betakes it self to that refuge, is so far anti-christian and plainly declares it has not truth enough on its side to rely on argument (which is only fit to convince the mind) but must make men lyars and hypocrites by force, who would never be profelytes by persuation.

4 There are three sorts of judgment considerable in this matter; one absolute, which is proper to God; another ministerial, which belongs to the Church (and especially such as are in office therein) and the third, a judgment of discretion, which is the privilege and birthright of every Christian, and which whoever would take from us, tell us plainly enough what they intend to do with us, and use us as the *Philistines* did *Sampson*, they first put out his eyes, and then made him grind in their mill; so would the Papists do by us, and so will they do, whenever God, for our sins, gives them power and opportunity.

5. There is no judgment in matters of faith, and points of controversy, absolute and deceeive; but that of God himself nor any judgment of his (that we can come at in our present state) but that which he hath
left

left us upon record in the Holy Scriptures; if God had designed, we should have consulted any other Judge, he would have told us who he was, and where we should find him.

6. Therefore the Pope, or a general Council, are not infallible: and it is astonishing, that it should ever come into the heads of any to think they are, or that any should arrogate such a prerogative to themselves, were it not that the Scriptures must be fulfilled, which have told that there would arise one, who would, sitting in the temple of God, shew himself as God, *2 Thess. ii. 4.* And that God would send wicked men (who had long been false to their light) strong delusion (or the efficacy of error) to believe a lye, *verse 11, 12.* A lye, the most gross absur'd and ill coloured, that ever was imposed upon the faith of man.

That a wicked wretch (meerly by becoming Pope) should commence infallible; that a company of fallible men (by coming together in a Council, falsely, called general) should presently receive the gift of Inspiration, is so improbable, and enthusiastical, that men must be out of their wits, before they can give credit to it.

Against this absur'd, but fundamental tenet of the Romish Church, I shall briefly mention the following arguments, which if any

Papist, how learned soever, can fairly answer, I will not only be his proselyte, but his slave.

1. God himself has appointed no other infallible judge of controversies of faith, but himself, speaking in and by the Scriptures; if there be any other, let him produce his commission, but let it be a little more full and express than those generales, "Thou art *Peter*," "on this rock, I have built my Church," and the rest which they produce, that have evidently no manner of relation to the matter in dispute between them and us. God sends us to the law, and to the Testimony, *Isaiab* viii. 20. to *Moses* and the Prophets, *Luke* xvi. 29. And to them we are willing to go, and by them to be determined; but of Popes and general Councils, as infallible judges of controversy, there is not one word in all the holy Books, which are the charter of our salvation.

2. The Lord Jesus Christ and his Apostles, did always (when any matter of dispute arose) appeal to the Holy Scriptures; and surely it is more safe to do as they did, than to trust the words, or follow the examples of any that have arisen since their times. Christ and his Apostles, might (with a much better grace, and with infinitely more evidence of truth) have insisted upon their own authority, and infallibility than any of latter times,

espe-

especially, than they of the Church of *Rome* (who boast so much, and prove so little) and yet they chose to appeal to the understandings, and consciences, of men, and to the Holy Scriptures: *I speak as to wise men* (saith the Apostle) *judge ye what I say*, 1 Cor. x. 15. And our Saviour in his dispute, with the *Sadduces* refers them to the writings of *Moses*, which themselves acknowledged for Divine, *Luke* xx. 37.

3. Popes and Councils have erred, and that most grossly, and therefore nothing is more certain, than that they may still do so. A little skill in history will soon convince any man of common sense, and understanding, of the truth of this.

Their own historians and writers of controversy, acknowledge that Pope *Liberius* consented to Arianism, as did several of their Councils to Eutychianism, Nestorianism; and divers other gross Errors, have had the consent of Popes and Councils for their justification; some of their Popes have denied the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the body, and the life to come.

Safe trustees, undoubtedly, they were of the Christian faith, or depositum! unerring guides of the souls of men in the way of salvation!

There is no dealing with men, who will thus dispute against facts which themselves
allow

allow. The Church is infallible, yet deceived, and a deceiver!

Surely on this absur'd and wicked hypothesis, he was not much amiss, who cried out, *Sit anima mea cum Philosophis*, for I had rather be *Aristotle* than Pope *John*, in the day of judgment.

4. Our dispute seems to be only, whether God shall be owned for God, and man for (what he naturally and necessarily is) a frail, mutable, and fallible creature.

Does not God know his own mind? Or cannot he sufficiently interpret it? What strange creatures are these, who would persuade us, that because God could not speak his mind plainly and intelligibly enough, we must go to Popes, and Councils, to know what he meant, when many an honest plowman understands his Bible much better than they ever did, as evidently appears by the faith, professions, and lives, of the one, and of the other.

God is our Lord, our Lawgiver, and our Judge, and he will save us, *Isaiab xxxiii. 22.* though Popes and Councils damn us (declaratively, for thanks be to God, they can do no more) and blinded princes lend them their power to burn and destroy us.

5. The silence of the Scriptures in this matter, is sufficient to determine our belief, that there is no human visible infallible

ble judge of controversies upon earth ; for if there were, this ought to have been the plainest truth in our whole Bibles, and written there in such large and legible characters, that he who runs might read it. But is it so after all the pother that has been made in this dispute, and all the zeal they have exerted ? They have been able only to quote a few general expressions of Scripture, that come not at all to the point in view.

Feed my sheep. Therefore *Peter* was infallible ; therefore the Pope was his successor ; therefore he shares in his infallibility : such therefore, were never invented since logick became an art, and the natural logick of all mankind confutes them.

It is a shame to human nature, that such cavils as these should be thought to need, or deserve an answer.

If *Peter* had been the prince of the Apostles, and infallible, and that as Bishop of *Rome* ; is it imaginable we should not have one word of it in all the Epistle to the *Romans* ?

Was *Peter* so extreamly modest, that he would not say a syllable of it in his two Epistles ; tho' so much depended on it, and it made so greatly for his honour ? They that can believe this, may believe transubstantiation ; may believe in Mahomet, may believe there is no God, no Christ, no Heaven,
no

no Hell : and really, I am afraid, that most of the defenders of this desperate cause, are no better than masked Infidels.

6. If the Pope be infallible, why does he not give us an infallible version of the Bible, or an infallible commentary upon it ? Why does he not infallibly, once for all, decide and determine all the controversies in the Church of *Rome* ; which give so much scandal to the Christian, Jewish, Mahometan, and Pagan world ? Why does he not tell us whether *Jansenius* or *Loyola* were in the right about predestination, grace, and free will ? He has indeed now and then published a bull against an injured and an oppressed party, to gratify a powerful potentate : but his decisions are as dark as the *Delphick* Oracles of old, and he always leaves in them some hole to creep out, as the posture of affairs shall happen to change.

Sixtus the 5th, and *Clement* the 8th, published two editions of the vulgar *Latin* Bible, that differed from each other in a vast number of particulars, and some of them of great importance, and yet both, forsooth, infallible.

When will God restore sinful mankind to the due use of their natural faculties ? (corrupted and depraved, and almost lost in just punishment of their sin and wickedness, and hatred to, and rebellion against the divine light) whenever that happy hour shall come (and
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we wait and pray for it) then farwell Popery for ever, for a man must make himself a brute, before he can persuade himself to become a Papist.

7. Do but consider, for what end it is, that the Church of *Rome* claims infallibility, and you have the strongest argument against it that can be. Is it for any thing, but that she may be judge in her own cause, and be believed on her own word? And whoever desires this, deserves not to be believed!

If a Papist challenge me to dispute with him, provided he will consent to be determined by sense, or reason, or Scripture, I will enter the lists with him; but if he will be concluded by nothing but the verdict of the present (*i. e.* his own Roman Catholick Church) I should think it to as much purpose to gape against a flaming oven, or to dispute with the *North* wind, as to enter the lists with such an antagonist. I know, before hand, all he can say, in two words, and all I can say, can signify nothing with him.

Well may they hurry us to *Smithfield*, they have no other way to silence us.

8. The primitive Churches, and the fathers of the four first centuries, knew of no such infallible judge, therefore it is a modern invention.

They always sent us to the Scriptures, never to *Rome*, as were easy to prove (if the

the nature of this exercise would bear such a length, as the shewing it would require) besides, that it hath partly been done already, when we were treating of the sufficiency of Scripture, without tradition.

I will just mention, and briefly answer, two or three of their principal objections, and so conclude, with a word or two of practical improvement.

Obj. 1. The Scripture, they say, is a rule, therefore it cannot be a judge.

Ans. God is the judge, but he judgeth according to the Scriptures, and would have us do so.

Obj. 2. The Scriptures do not expressly condemn particular Heresies, Arianism, Socinianism, &c.

Ans. Nor is there any need they should, they afford us light enough to condemn and avoid them, *Rectum est Index sui & Obliqui.*

Obj. 3. Common people cannot understand the Scriptures.

Ans. How then shall they understand all your Popes, Councils, and Fathers?

Obj. 4. But Christ bids us hear the Pharisees, who sat in *Moses* chair, *Matt.* xxiii. 2, 3.

Ans. *Ubi doctrina Moſis ibi cathedra Moſis*, Christ does not encourage his Disciples to follow the Pharisees blindfold, but quite contrary, to beware of their leaven, that is, their false doctrine, *Matt.* xvi. 11, 12.

Obj. 5.

Obj. 5. But must we not hear the Church?
Matt. xviii. 17.

Ans. Yes, if she speaks as Christ doth, but not else: if an Angel bring us another Gospel, we must hold him accursed, *Gal.* i. 8.

Obj. 6. But no Scripture is of any private interpretation, *2 Pet.* i. 21.

Ans. What then, Must the Church interpret it at pleasure, and we swallow all her Doctrines, right or wrong? That surely was never the Apostle *Peter's* mind, nor the mind of the Holy Ghost, by whose inspiration he wrote: the meaning plainly is, that the penmen of Scripture, were moved by the Holy Spirit of God, and did not write their own inventions, nor at, or according to, their own will and pleasure.

Now in a word, by way of use.

1. Be thankful to God, that we are of a Religion and Church, that allows us a judgment of discretion, and the liberty of searching our Bibles, that with us, the blind do not lead the blind, that both should fall into the ditch, *Matt.* xv. 14.

2. Be careful to improve our advantage, by reading the Scriptures diligently, and living up to our light, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience, *1 Tim.* iii. 9.

3. Pity them that sit in antichristian darkness, and them that suffer under antichristian cruelty, and beg of God a speedy and full discharge for them.

4. Love

4. Love your civil liberties, as the guards and outworks of your religious ones. Thank God for a legal Government, and let no artifice, bribery, or terrors, and threats, seduce you to consent, or contribute, to the turning it into a despotick one. Look to *France* and *Spain*, and see how impossible it is for Religion to thrive, where tyranny prevails; we were born freemen, and bred Protestants, let us earnestly pray, and endeavour, that neither we, nor our posterity, may ever wear any other, or worse, Character.



DISCOURSE V.

Of the Head, of the Church.

COL. i. 18.

And he is the head of the body, the Church.

UR blessed Lord Jesus Christ, is in this context recommended to our reverence and love, from the bright characters of his person, and the offices he has undertaken to perform on our behalf, from principles of love to us, and for our exceeding benefit.

In the 14th verse we are told, that we have redemption through his blood, even the remission of our sins, he has died a sacrifice to procure our pardon, the greatest blessing we needed, and without which, we could not have been capable of any other.

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In the *15th verse*, he is represented as the living, and express image of God the Father, and the first born, or first begotten of every creature, *i. e.* as the eternal and only begotten Son of God, before whom there was none, and to whom there is not, nor will ever be any like.

In the *16th verse*, he is set forth as Creator, and therefore he must be God, for none can create but God.

The *17th verse*, declares him the preserver of all things, which none can be, but he who is God by nature, for it requires the same divine power, to conserve things in being, as to produce them at first out of nothing, into being.

And now in the text, the Apostle comes to shew the excellency of his office, that he is the head of the Church, which is his body.

He is to it an head of influence, and an head of government; he animates, orders, maintains, and defends it. A most august character, which he will never give the honour of, to any mortal any more, than God the Father will give the glory of his Deity to any meer creature.

He is our head, as he is our Redeemer, having not only created us by his power, but also redeemed us by his blood.

Christ hath power over all creatures, angels, devils, men, stars, brutes, elements,
the

the vegetable world, for all are his servants; but he is head in a peculiar sense to the Church, his especially redeemed ones, the dear purchase of his tender love, and dying agonies.

God hath put all things under his feet, but he hath given him more, especially, to be head over all things, to the Church.

Doctrine. It is the peculiar glory and honour of the Lord Jesus Christ, to be head over the Church, which is his body.

We must necessarily here consider (as others have done before us.)

1. What that Church is, whose head Christ is said to be.

2. What an head, he is to the Church.

3. And what need the Church stands in, of such an head, or what the grounds and reasons are of Christ's standing, in this relation, to his body the Church.

I. What that Church is, to which Christ stands related as an head.

And it is thus described, by the generality of our reformed divines.

The Church is a society of men, called out of the world, by the effectual grace of God, according to his free purpose in election, and united to Christ by faith, through the inhabitation of his spirit; and to one another, by

the band of charity, that having obtained remission of sins, and regeneration, and expressed the fruits thereof, in an holy life in this world; they may be safe brought to the possession of eternal life, in the world to come.

Effectual calling of God, by his grace and spirit, lays the foundation of the Church, making living stones for the spiritual temple, and bringing them together.

This depends not on the capacities, or inclinations, of fallen sinners; but the free electing grace of God, who chooseth, and calleth whom he will, and leaves others, who have alike forfeited, and were alike disinclined. This choosing, or leaving, is an act of sovereignty, about which, none have any right to argue with God, and it is the highest arrogance to call him to our bar.

In our effectual calling, we are united to Christ by faith, and the fruit of that faith, is the remission of sins, which is God's act; but done by him for all, and only, believers on Christ: from this union, and faith, and remission, flows communion with God, such have their fellowship with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ.

And wherever there is such fellowship, the works of darkness will be put off, and the works of light, of grace, and holiness, will be faithfully and perseveringly perform'd, if there be time, and opportunity for it.

And

And all this, where ever it is really found, will most certainly issue in eternal life, to the glory of free-grace, and redeeming love, and the perpetual and compleat blifs of the happy subjects, of this distinguishing favour.

And the body, the complicate collection of all such, as are thus happily dignified and distinguished from the beginning to the end of time, we call the Church.

Now this is considerable in the following particulars.

1. There is the Church of the first born, whose names are written in heaven, *Heb. xii. 22.* All the elect, who have been, are, or shall be effectually call'd, those make up the intire mystical body of Christ; and he is an head to all, and each of them, and fully, and properly to them, only these are the chosen generation, the royal priesthood, the holy nation, the peculiar people spoken of, *1 Pet. ii. 9.* These are the kingdom of God, and the spouse of Christ.

2. Of these, some are militant here below, and others, triumphing in Heaven above: some are travelling and conflicting, others are got to their journeys end, and having their crowns on their heads, and their palms in their hands, see their God and Redeemer, and sing his praises.

They in heaven, and they on earth, are but one family, *Eph. iii. 15.*

3. That part which is yet here on earth, is called the universal Church; but in a certain respect, *viz.* In regard of its being scattered, and dispersed over a great part of the known world.

This is more, or less, visible in some places, and times, than in others; some times (though more rarely) in a prosperous flourishing state, but more frequently in a depressed, if not oppressed, one.

The Lord knoweth them, that are his, 2 Tim. ii. 19. Though men know them not, will not acknowledge them, but hate and persecute them.

Visibility is not, cannot be, any certain mark of the true Church, for antichrist may be on the throne, when the Church is in the wilderness.

And in the *Sardian* state, it is professed, there should be but a few names left, and it is expressed, as matter of wonder, that there were even those few to be found among them, *Rev.* iii. 4.

4. In the visible Church, there are, and always have been, and will be Hypocrites; the wheat and the chaff are mixed in the floor, the good seed, and the tares in the field.

Many have common gifts of restraining grace, who have no true saving grace, and shall perish at last, *Matt.* xiii. 24, 25.

Therefore it is not safe, for any man to expect salvation, meerly, for his being of the truest, best, and purest Church in the world.

A man may prophecy, yea, and work miracles in Christ's name; and eat and drink with him at his table, and yet be cast forth into outer darkness, as a worker of iniquity, *Matt. vii. 22.*

5. Particular Churches have failed, and may fail through their own default, not through any breach of Christ's promise; but the universal Church hath a promise for its security, and shall never wholly cease, or be abolished, the gates of hell, shall not prevail against it, *Matt. xvi. 18.*

It is the highest presumption for any particular Church, to arrogate to it self, the titles and privileges of the universal; as the Church of *Rome* most notoriously does, and the *Donatists* of old did, and many of differing sects, and parties now a days do.

Out of the universal Church, there is no salvation; but we cannot say so, of this, or that particular Church, whether *Rome*, *England*, *Scotland*, *Geneva*, or any of the lesser Churches, or parties, living within the bounds of those larger districts.

When men say, lo here is Christ, or there is Christ (exclusively) believe them not, *Matt. xxiv. 23.*

And yet on the other hand, be not indifferent, what particular Church, you joyn your selves too, for stated communion; but chose the best you can, and then adhere to it, and see that you be living members of Jesus Christ, and adorn your profession by a truly Gospel conversation, and you are safe, though men despise you, and cast you out, and call you Hereticks and Schismatics; for it is not names, but things, that will carry it at the great day: however, the contrary method, commonly prevails for the present.

Now this Church is called a body (as an excellent person notes) on two accounts.

1. The union of its parts, among themselves.

2. Their joint dependance on one common head, the Lord Jesus Christ.

As in the natural body, there are many parts and members; but they are not disjoined from, but most intimately united to, and with each other, so it is in Christ's mystical body.

Faith knits the members to Christ, and love knits them to one another: but this union, is to be understood, only, as to the essentials, or chief integrals; for in accidentals, there will be no perfect union, 'till we get to heaven.

Again, they are all dependant on one common head, and this strengthens their union, with

with affection, and helpfulness to, and regards for, one another.

Rom. xii. 5. *We being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another*: we are all one body, and have a mutual sympathy, and fellow feeling.

If we are not united to Christ, we are but dead branches; if we depend not on him, we cannot derive the influences of spiritual life, or the right to eternal life, from him.

If we are out of Christ, it will not avail us to have been within the pale of the visible Church.

2. We come next to inquire, what an head Christ is, to his body, the Church.

And it includes two things.

1. That he is an head, in respect of influence, and causality.

2. That he is so, in respect of power, and authority.

1. Christ is the head of his Church, in respect of influence and causality.

Having purchased the spirit, he disposeth it for the begetting, maintaining, encreasing, and perfecting spiritual life in all that are given him of his father.

He promised his Disciples, that he would send the comforter to them, to supply the lack of his bodily presence, *John* xv. 26. and the Apostle tells us, *Gal.* iv. 6. that God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts. The

The spirit is given to Christ above measure, from him to us by measure; and if any man have not the spirit of Christ, he is none of his, *Rom. viii. 9.*

2. Christ is head of his Church, in respect of power and authority.

Which he exerciseth in gathering it; in governing it; in appointing for it the ordinances of worship; in limiting the kinds and powers of Church-officers; and in supporting and defending his Church in all her conflicts, and finally, delivering her from all enemies and dangers, and destroying all those adversaries who rejoyced in her tears, and satiate themselves with her blood.

But the time, and other matter in view, will not allow me to instance particularly on these.

And he who is, and does all this, is and must be God and Man in one person, it is both suitable and necessary, that he partake of our nature, and he must be God likewise, or he would have no power, or capacity, to be the Church's universal king and head, he must know hearts, and be able to influence them as he will, which none can do but God only.

3. As to the necessity of Christ's headship over the Church, it may be argued,

1. From its being a society; or body polittick, to which government, and a governing head,

head, is necessary, else the Church would be but a rude mass, an undigested heap, without order, beauty, or strength.

2. The great advantages, that this society is form'd to partake of, makes a governing head, and an head of influence, and that such a one as Christ is to be necessary to it.

How else, shall the pardon of sin be purchased, and bestowed?

Who shall communicate to us, the quickening sanctifying spirit, if he do not?

Who shall judge, and reward us, and put the crown of eternal life upon our heads, if Christ our king, and head do it not?

3. The duties we are called to in the Church, and as members of it, are such, as are far above our natural strength; and therefore we must have Christ, as an head of influence, to bestow his spirit upon us, to dispose, and enable us thereunto.

John xv. 5. Without him we can do nothing.

Not obey God universally, not mortify our bosom lusts, not resist temptations, and that to victory, not endure the fiery tryal, and persevere against all opposition; if Christ be not our head, the devil, the world, and our own hearts, will quickly be too hard for us, and we shall sink, and perish for ever.

Use 1. How great an honour, is put upon the human nature, by Christ's taking it upon him, that he might be head of the Church,
his

his body taken from among men, separated, and called to grace and glory.

Christ is superior to Angels, but not so properly a head to them, as to us: as to his being a mediator of confirmation to them; the notion is doubtful, and has not clear Scripture light enough, to ground an affirmative determination on.

We are sure he took not on him, the nature of angels, but he took on him the seed of *Abraham*; he is our Goel, our near kinsman, in whom the right of redemption was, *We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, Eph. v. 30.

That Christ should have been incarnate, if *Adam* had not fallen, is an unproved fancy; let us then glorify the Redeemer, and glorify God, in, and for him.

2. Learn hence, how groundless, absur'd, and presumptuous, the Pope's pretensions to an universal headship over the Church are.

He will needs be Christ's vicar, and an universal ministerial head under him; but his great patron *Bellarmino*, can bring nothing in proof of his claim, but what a boy of fifteen, is able to confute.

Would it not be ridiculously absur'd, to say, the Church was the Pope's body, which she must be, if the Pope be her head?

Can

Can any be a governing head to the Church, who cannot be a vital head, nor communicate the influences of spiritual life to her.

Can the Pope give laws to the universal Church? He pretends, indeed, to do so, but his claim has never been received, nor acknowledged by the universal Church, but protested against in every age, as horrible usurpation and sacrilege, and that justly.

Can he be a head to those, whom he does not know; and who do not so much as know that there is such a thing as a Pope upon earth?

There are those who really, and savingly, believe in Christ, who never heard of his pretended Vicegerent, but are utter strangers to both name and thing.

The first pretence of setting up a Pope, was to prevent schisms, and promote unity: but time, and the event, has plainly shown that it was a dangerous (as well as wicked) experiment; for nothing has multiplied and perpetuated divisions more than this.

But must not the Church be governed? Yes, and it is well and sufficiently governed by Christ himself in, and by, his word and spirit; Will monsters of men pretend to govern Christ's universal Church better than he himself can do?

But Christ is absent, and therefore there must be an universal visible human head to
repre-

represent him, and act in his place and stead here on earth.

This is contrary to Christ's own promise; lo I am with you always to the end of the world, *Matt. xxviii. 20.*

The Papists love always to speak of Christ as absent; it is sure, because they love not his presence, and have a great deal of reason to fear it.

But tho', we have not his bodily presence, we have his word and spirit, and his providential care and government, and that will serve us very comfortably 'till we get to heaven.

But monarchy is the best government.

What then, is not Christ our monarch? and can we be faithful to him if we receive an usurper that can produce no credentials, but will needs be taken for his viceroy and deputy on his own word?

Another of *Bellarmino's* toping arguments, is from the hierarchy of Angels, of which he fancies *Lucifer* was the head before his fall, and *Michael* since; but as one says, this is to transubstantiate a star into an angel, and to argue from one absurdity to another.

I suppose they learned this from a secret tradition in their own keeping, for the written word (our rule of faith) and common known tradition, says not a word of it.

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I might say much more upon this head ; but I am weary of it, and think it needless.

3. Let every one of us see to it, that we practically receive Christ Jesus the Lord, for our only king and head, rejecting and forsaking all other.

The chaste spouse will have but one husband, and will cleave to him with intire affection, conjugal love knows no partition, if it be divided it is destroyed.

If we have faith in Christ, and are faithful to him, we shall reject the Pope with abhorrence, as a vile usurper.

4. This calls upon us to try our selves, whether Christ be indeed our head.

Are we united to him by faith?

Do we receive from him the influences of spiritual life, and that daily?

Do we love him uprightly?

Do we obey his laws, and are we guided by his spirit?

Do we deny our selves, and take up our cross and follow him?

Do we sincerely love all the members of his mystical body, and that with a fervent vital practical love?

Lastly, Learn hence to trust in Christ for salvation to our selves, and to his whole Church, he is the saviour of his body.

He

Others

He is both able and willing to save us, he wants no interest in heaven, no power on earth, no love to and sympathy with us.

Let therefore *Sion*, and every true believer, trust, rejoyce, and glory, in this their King.

Amen, and Amen.



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D I S.

DISCOURSE VI.

Of obedience due from *Ecclesiasticks*, as well as others, to lawful governours.

R O M. xiii. i.

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers.



Short and full text, and one would think too plain to be wrested, to subserve the designs of popery, tyranny, or lawless liberty.

Yet though it come from Heaven, it has often been wrested to countenance designs black as Hell, and give colour to practices as base in themselves, and as mischeivous to mankind, as can well be imagined.

The Papists take it for granted (without any shadow of proof) that the higher powers are the Pope and his Clergy, or at least, that the higher powers here spoken of are their subjects, and inferiour to them.

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Others

Others take the words to oblige our submission, subjection and obedience to the powers in possession, however they came by it; though as wickedly as *Phocas* did, by the murder of the Emperor *Mauritius* and his children.

Others pretend a lineal succession by divine right in every monarchy, absolute, or limited, (which with them is the only lawful form of government) and so put the rights of Princes upon so disputable and precarious a title, that it is impossible for us to know whom we ought to obey, or not to obey, or even to resist.

For if we must never own our Prince for our rightful Sovereign, till he can prove his pedigree and primogeniture from *Adam* or *Noah*, we are at a fine pass; and princes may go look for their allegiance due to them from their subjects.

I take it for granted that this Text directs to, and commands, and under severe penalties (both in this and the future world) chargeth upon subjects the duty of obedience to their lawful sovereigns, whoever they be.

But it determines not the particular persons who are to be acknowledged for rightful sovereigns, any more than it does who are to be their subjects, or the particular measures of subjection and obedience; but leaves those to be directed and determined by the laws, rights and usages of every country.

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Subjects are to obey for conscience sake; but they are not to obey blindly and unreasonably, *i. e.* unconscionably.

And the flatterers of Princes do but degrade them to be Kings of brutes, while they require of their subjects more for them, than God does for himself, *i. e.* more than a reasonable service, and indeed that more is less.

The plain sense of the text is, that every soul, that is (according to the Hebrew way of speaking, which the Greek of the New Testament frequently imitates) every man, whether he be Pope, Cardinal, Patriarch, Bishop, or Priest, as one well glosseth, be subject, and yield a free, voluntary, rational, legal, submission and obedience to the higher powers, or those who are lawfully set over him, whether the King as supream, or officers under him, and authorised by him in the things for which government was appointed of God; to wit the security of the common peace, welfare and happiness: for magistrates are not a terror to good works, but to the evil, as it here follows in the beginning of the third *verse*.

And having thus briefly open'd the words, the point I would a little prosecute from them is this.

Doctrine. That the Pope has no rightful power or authority over civil governors, and priests have no exemption from the

duties towards them, which other subjects in common are obliged to.

It is highly unaccountable, that priests should pretend to, or princes should suffer such a superiority of the ecclesiastical over the civil power.

If the most authentick historys had not informed us, that it has often been thus in fact, the nicest speculation would have rendred it incredible.

The Lord Jesus Christ, the true head of the Church, openly acknowledged and avowed that his kingdom was not of this world, *John xviii. 36.* They who profess themselves his ministers have no claim, but under him, and by his authority (real or pretended); how then come they to set up for an external coercive power over the princes of the earth? One would be amazed at the thought, were it not too well known, that pride (which was the Devil's sin) is the reigning vice of all who remain in the Devil's kingdom; and that even special grace did not so far subdue it, no not in Christ's own Disciples, but that one of their first contentions (even while he was present with them) was, which of them should be greatest; and our Lord's decision of that question, one would have thought shou'd have been sufficient to have mortified priestly pride, and banish'd it from the world for ever, *Luke xxii. 24, 25, 26.* But

But since such a claim is advanced, and stiffly contended for, in the Romish Church, let us consider it, and we shall soon see how false and ill grounded it is.

1. We must enquire who the Clergy are, for whom this privilege is so hotly claimed.

The word Clergy is derived from a Greek word, *Κληρὸς*, which signifies a lot or portion; *And thus the Lord's portion is his people*, Deut. xxxii. 9. 1 Pet. v. 3. *Neither as being Lords (or Lording it) over God's heritage*, his Clergy; so the word signifies and is plainly meant, not of the priests, but of the people.

But in later times, the word has been very much used to denote persons set apart to sacred functions, whose office and duty it is to instruct the people in the word and will of God; to go before them in the publick acts of worship; to administer to them all Gospel ordinances; to watch for their souls, as those that must give an account; to oversee their lives and conversations; to admonish, reprove, rebuke, exhort; to encourage the good, and by discipline, to separate the precious from the vile.

All which they are to do by reason, persuasion, Scripture evidence, and the exercise of a spiritual not civil or coercive authority.

2. Those of this character are certainly as much subjects to the princes in whose domi-

nions they live, as any other of their people are.

For what is there in their persons or character to make a difference? Are they not as weak and frail and fallible as other men? Are they not as much natives of the places in which they were born? Do they not as much hold all the advantages they are possessed of under their prince, as any others do? Are they not as much men of like passions?

Have not as many of them been found guilty of tumults, seditions, rebellions (in proportion to their numbers) as of any others? And have they not greater advantages for seducing the people (if they be wicked and of tumultuous Spirits) than others have? And shall they be left without a bridle? Must princes be rid upon by them at pleasure? They shall then be so most unmercifully; as we find some of the greatest of them have been made to hold their stirrups, wait on them bare foot, kiss their feet, serve them for footstools in mounting their prancing steeds, in order to pompous and triumphant processions: are these the Disciples of the humble Jesus? The meek followers of him, who was led forth as a sheep to the slaughter, and as a sheep before the shearers was dumb? Who came not to be ministered to, but to minister, and taught that the lowest humility was the way to the truest and highest exaltation.

3. The duty of allegiance is owing to a Pagan as well as to a Christian, to a Popish as well as to a Protestant prince; if he be (by the constitution and laws of the place in which we live) our lawful and rightful governour; *For the powers that be are ordained of God,* Rom. xiii. 1. latter part.

But here I interpose, not as to the rights of this, or that particular nation or kingdom; because, I suppose the determination of that, is the province of lawyers, and not of divines as such.

Great endeavours have been used to draw Protestant ministers into declarations in things of this nature out of their sphere; that they who get the better in contests of that kind, may have something to bespatter us with, and reproach and ruin Religion through our fides. But we ought to follow our blessed Lord, who practised as he taught, and has shown us in this very case the right way of being wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

We claim no authority in civil affairs; we profess a readiness, rather to suffer wrong than do any; but we are not, for all that (nor need be) indifferent to the continuance, or loss of the legal, established civil rights of our selves and our posterity.

4. That ministers or clergymen as well as others, are and ought to be subject for conscience sake to the civil powers, under whom

they live, and by whom they are protected, may be proved by a great variety of arguments, both from Scripture and Reason, of which I shall only at present hint a few.

1. The Apostle *Paul* acknowledged his subjection to the Roman Emperour by his appeal to him, *Acts* xxv. 11.

Cæsar had a civil right to govern his person, and judge of his cause, or he would not have appealed to him.

Had he had any privilege as a Clergyman he must have known it; and had been false to his trust and to his brethren, if he had betrayed it; but he was far from any such conceit, or from making any such pretensions.

The Clergy that resisted our Kings here in *England*, *Becket*, *Anselm*, &c. appealed to the Pope as owning his superior authority: but this Doctrine and practice was unknown in the Apostles times and many ages after.

The Apostle owned that he stood at *Cæsar's* judgment seat, where he ought to be tried; and he deserves to be hanged for a traitor and a rebel, who appeals from his native lawful Prince to any foreign Tribunal.

2. The text is as express in the case as one would wish. It speaks of every soul, every human person without exemption; without the least distinction between the Laity and the Clergy, or assigning any privilege in this matter to the one above the other; and where the

the law makes no distinction, we have no ground to make any.

3. The Apostle lays a strict charge upon Ministers to preach obedience to Magistrates, and therefore they ought to practice it themselves; and that after a most exemplary manner, else they pull down with one hand what they build with the other.

Titus iii. 1. Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates. The Heathens objected to the first Christians, that they were a lawless sect that pretended Christian Liberty, as an exemption from due obedience to civil powers: the Apostles judged it exceeding necessary, that all pretences for such a cavil should be taken away; and therefore they are frequent and earnest in their exhortations to ministers to preach, and people to practice just obedience to civil powers. It was only the *Gnosticks* and such other *Hereticks* of old, and the *Popists* of late that have ever given any just or even plausible handle to such a calumny, at least they have done it the most frequently and the most notoriously of any.

4. The Apostle *Peter* (from whom the Popish Clergy pretend to their right of exemption, from the inspection and authority of the civil magistrate) is as express in this point as the Apostle *Paul* is.

ON 1 Peter ii. 13, 14, 15, 16, *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; or unto governours, as unto them that are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: As free, and not using your (Christian) liberty as a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.*

What a strange man was the Apostle Peter to write at this rate, if he believed himself (as to worldly superiority) to be a greater and a better man than *Cæsar*? would he not rather on that supposition have said, obey the civil powers as far as you find them obedient to me, who am Christ's vicar, and no farther: but the honest fisherman had not then caught the fish, which his successors have since done; nor drawn so many followers into his net: he was too intent upon the Kingdom of Heaven, and the expectation of martyrdom, to be contriving projects for the extent, absolute-ness, and duration of an earthly Kingdom for himself.

I doubt not most of his pretended modern successors count him no better than a fool; but whether he or they were fools, will appear when Jesus Christ shall come to judge the world in righteousness.

5. The Jewish Priests, even their high Priests, and the Prophets were subject in civil and temporal affairs to their princes; therefore the Gospel ministers ought to be so likewise. *Aaron* was so to *Moses*, *Abimelech* to *Saul*, *Abiathar* to *Solomon*; and that though the Jewish government were a *Theocracy*, in which sort of government one should have thought the high Priest were more a representative of God, and fitter to be entrusted with the supreme civil government under him, than even the prince himself; but God's thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor his ways as our ways, but the foolishness of God is wiser than man.

6. The exemption of Priests from the civil government would render them entirely independent thereon, and so rob the sovereign of a vast number of his lawful subjects, and make them accountable and even slaves to a foreign power and jurisdiction; than which nothing can be more contrary to the good rules of civil policy, or more dangerous to the government, and even the Souls of princes.

This very thing cost *Henry* the third and *Henry* the fourth of *France* their lives; and brought our glorious Queen *Elizabeth* into numberless dangers, in which, though God by a peculiar providence preserved her, yet it was no thanks to the Pope and his Clergy, that she had not died an untimely death.

7. The

7. The Clergy are bound to pray for their Princes; therefore they are bound not to practice against them, nor to entertain themselves, or infuse into others, any principles that are inconsistent with their safety, or the happy government of the realms under their care.

It is a maxim, than which there is scarce any one more unquestionable, that what we are bound to pray for, that we are bound to endeavour: but we are bound to pray for Kings and all in authority, that under them we may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty, 2 *Tim.* i. 2. Therefore this ought to be our great and constant care and endeavour: but how can we do this, when we no longer count our selves their subjects, and think our selves more obliged to a foreign power, than to that to which God has subjected us.

8. Protection calls for allegiance; and therefore Priests who deny allegiance to their Prince, withdraw themselves from his protection, and have no just cause of complaint, if they are taken up and hanged as soon as they are detected and convicted; for what right has he to his life, whose avowed principles will not allow him to employ it, but to his princes destruction, and the confusion of the common wealth.

9. The Clergy in many and most places under the government of Christian Princes enjoy

enjoy great privileges, and immunities, which no body would envy them (even when they are carried to somewhat too great an height) if they would use them well: but surely nothing can be more ungrateful, than for those who have been raised above the common level, to employ all their art and power against him, by whom they were so advanced. And yet he must be a stranger to history, who knows not that this has commonly been the case; and that few princes have been more unhappy, than those who have been led by the Councils of a worldly clergy, and have heaped the greatest favour, wealth, and the highest honours upon them. What a plague was Cardinal *Richlieu* to *Lewis* the XIII. of *France*, all his days the prince hated and feared him, and the crafty minister made him the instrument of his revenge, and the terror and scourge of his innocent people, Papists as well as Protestants.

10. Nothing tends to expose Religion, and the sacred ministry to the scoffs of Atheists, and Deists, and to the hatred and jealousy of Princes, so much as those arrogant usurpations of the Clergy.

When they see them hunt after wealth and power, they presently take all Religion for a cheat, and conclude, that Clergymen speak contemptuously of the world, only that they may have it all to themselves: and when wise
and

and valiant Princes are upon thrones, and observe how the papal Clergy attempt to ride them, it makes them think they can never be safe, unless they punish the innocent with the guilty; and they are ready to cry out with our profane Poet, "that Priests of all Religions are the same:" woe to the world, because of such offences, but woe and a thousand woes to those by whom they come.

But say they, should not the shepherds rule the sheep?

Arguing from similitudes is no good logic, especially when the argument may be as easily turned the other way.

But say the Romish Priests, shall I teach my Prince to day, and he hang me to morrow?

Yes if you deserve it: if a sacred character can protect from the just punishment of state crimes, no Prince can either be safe, or know when he is so: but I must not enter further into the detail of this argument, but conclude with a word or two of use.

1. What an excellent Religion is that of reformed Christianity, which maintains and cherisheth a spirit of liberty, justly so called; and at the same time lays the conscience under the strongest obligations to just obedience to lawful governours, and the support of their government.

2. What

2. What a tyranny is that of *Rome*, which exposeth the lives of Princes to continual danger; and teacheth their subjects to become rebels and glory in their being so? how many Tyburn martyrs have been canonized at *Rome*, for Saints? though if they were Saints, *Peter* and *Paul* were none, for their principles and practices differ as much as white and black light and darkness.

3. Here is one plain ground for the decision of that great question which is the true Church, judge by this rule, which makes the most quiet peaceable and conscientious subjects.

4. We ought to watch and pray, that we, our prince, and our posterity may be preserved from the return of Popish tyranny, which would make us eat our God, hate our lawful Princes, and run the hazard of eternal damnation, by counter-acting in so plain an instance, the precepts and practice of our Lord and Saviour and his Apostles.



D I S.

DISCOURSE VII.

Of the Antichrist.

2 THES. ii. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

*Let no man deceive you by any means :
for that day shall not come, except
there come a falling away first, and
that man of sin be revealed, the son
of perdition : Who opposeth and ex-
alteth himself above all that is called
God, or that is worshiped ; so that
he as God sitteth in the temple of
God, shewing himself that he is God.
Remember ye not, that when I was
yet with you, I told you these things ?
And now ye know what withholdeth,
that he might be revealed in his
time. For the mystery of iniquity
doth*

doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders. And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.



Nothing can sooner bring the whole dispute between the Protestants and Papists to a decisive and final issue, than the just determination of this one Question, Whether the Pope (or rather the Papal Hierarchy) be the Antichrist?

The Protestants have generally, from the beginning of the Reformation, held the affirmative; some few of our more modern *English* Divines have asserted the contrary, or at least been unwilling to determine positively in the matter.

H

But

But I may be bold to say, that it was never doubted in the Church of *England* before Bishop *Laud's* time, but that the Pope was *Antichrist*. Most of the Confessions of the reformed Churches expressly assert it.

And it is scarce imaginable, how so many and clear characters of Antichrist should agree to the Roman Polity in such a manner (as they do to no other person, or society, in the world) and yet the Pope (meaning thereby not a single person, but the Papal Succession and Government) not be the Antichrist. The examining and applying these characters is to be our business at this time, and the words I have read to you, exhibit the chief of them.

For the word *Antichrist* (according to the force of the *Greek* particle *ἀντι* in composition) signifies either an enemy to Christ or a Vice-Christ, and it agrees to the Pope in both senses; since he pretends to be Christ's Vicar, and acts in his name, as by his authority and for him; and yet is the most notorious enemy to his person, offices, truths, worship, &c. in the world.

That such a one should arise, is foretold in my text, and that this is he, will appear from the following arguments taken out of it, and other Scriptures which treat of this matter.

I. We argue from the place where the Antichrist was to show himself, and that is in
the

the Temple of God, *verse 4.* which cannot be meant of the Temple at *Jerusalem*, which was quickly to be destroyed: but the Christian Church, which is God's Temple, where he is truly worshiped. And even particular Christians are called the Temple of God and of the Holy Ghost, *Eph. ii. 21. 1 Cor. iii. 16, 17. 2 Cor. vi. 16.*

Here the Antichrist was to spring up, and be revealed, to exercise a tyranny over the Christian Church, and raise up a civil war in it, between the true and the counterfeit members, the faithful witnesses of Jesus, and the faithless revolters from his laws and government, though still retaining his name, and pretending to glory in it.

Thus the Pope sitteth in the Temple of God; for he calleth his followers the Christian Catholick and Apostolick Church: he arrogates to himself a Primacy in and over it; he counts all Hereticks and Schismaticks that resist his usurpation and tyranny; and he so rules in the Church, as by his government to destroy it, altering the very nature of the society, and frustrating the very ends for which it was by our blessed Lord erected.

More particularly, Antichrist was to have his seat at *Rome*, mystical *Babylon* the City standing upon seven hills, *Rev. xvii. 9.* That *Rome* is *Babylon*, diverse of the most learned Papists themselves do not deny.

And it must be understood of *Rome Christian*, not of *Rome Pagan*; because it is called *Sodom* and *Egypt*, where our Lord was crucified, *Rev. xi. 8.*

But say the Papists, Christ was crucified at *Jerusalem* not at *Rome*. True, literally he was so; but it is spiritually and mystically here spoken of.

And no place in the world ever deserved the names of *Sodom* and *Egypt*, as *Rome* papal has done: *Sodom* for the most detestable filthiness there openly practised and connived at, not to say encouraged.

The Pope tolerating stews at a certain rate, and drawing a large yearly revenue therefrom, and *Egypt* for the blindness, idolatry, and cruelty reigning there.

And though Christ was not crucified at *Rome*, yet he was in the Roman Territories, *Judea* being then a Province of *Rome*; and he had been again and again crucified there in his martyr'd members; and he is there daily crucified, and put to open shame by their luxuries, impurities, blasphemies, and idolatries in their Mass especially; in which they profess to tear in pieces his glorified body with their teeth.

2. If we consider the time when Antichrist was to be revealed, this will strengthen the evidence, that the Pope, or the Romish Polity, is the Antichrist.

Now

Now this was not to be (as the Papists dream) at the very end of the world, a little before Christ's second coming; but the mystery of iniquity began to work even in the Apostles times, *verse 7.*

The beginnings of the rise of Antichrist were secret, and by slow and insensible degrees; on which account it is stiled a mystery of iniquity.

And the power of the Roman Empire hinder'd his appearing, which made the Christians in *Tertullian's* time pray, *pro mora finis* (not as he is commonly mistaken, for the delay of Christ's second coming to judgment) but for the deferring of the dissolution of the Roman Empire, for then they knew Antichrist was to be revealed; which is what is obscurely hinted in the latter part of the seventh *verse*, compared with *Rev. xvii. 12, 13.*

The old Roman Empire ended in *Augustulus*, about the year 476, and then the Popes began to lift up themselves more remarkably, and gradually to encroach upon the authority of Princes and the liberties of the people; and to lay the scheme of their universal dominion and tyranny.

So that this mystery of iniquity, as to its conception, began very early, it was fully born and revealed about the year 606, when *Boniface* the third assum'd the title of universal Bishop; its growth may be reckoned from

Boniface to *Clement* the seventh, about the year 1000; its most flourishing state from thence to the Reformation; and its downfall and ruin began in the Reformation, and will certainly be accomplished in the time fore-appointed in the divine Decree, and signified (though obscurely till the event explain them) in the prophetick writings, *verse* 8.

3. We argue from the characters and state of the person of Antichrist, as declared to us in the Holy Scriptures, we shall name a few of them.

1. Apostacy, there shall come a falling away first, *verse* 3.

Which Apostacy is to be understood of a defection from God, and the true Christian Faith and Religion: and this the Romanists are most notoriously guilty of, though they retain the name of Christians, and profess to believe all the articles of the Apostle's Creed; yet have they so corrupted the main ones, relating to Christ and our redemption and salvation by him; that they have nothing left but the name, shadow, and shell of Christianity among them.

They have corrupted the Christian doctrine with innumerable Heresies, the Christian worship with the most foppish and ridiculous superstitions: they have brought into the Christian Church the most detestable idolatries; they persecute the true Saints and servants
of

of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, with the utmost fury and malice, and with a rage that reacheth up to Heaven.

Under the name of Christ, they plainly shew themselves actuated by the spirit of the Devil, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning. See the Antichristian Apostacy fully described by the Apostle, (1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3. *Now the spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.*) and then judge whether or no the Pope (or papal Hierarchy) be not the Antichrist.

2. He is the enemy and the rival of our Lord Jesus Christ, the true head of the Church; he is the man of sin, the son of perdition, and a lawless rebel against God and his Christ, *verse 3.* He opposeth the purity of doctrine and worship, and exalteth himself above all that is called God, dispensing with the divine laws, and exercising an Antichristian tyranny in the Church over the souls and bodies of men.

Insulting the monarchs of the earth, destroying the laws and liberties of nations,

shewing himself as God, and expecting that homage and obedience which is due to God only.

He is an impostor and deceiver, *verse 10.*

He usurps upon and overthrows the mediatorial office of Christ, by setting up Saints and Angels for mediators; destroys Christ's prophetic office, by advancing traditions against Scripture, and proclaiming his own infallibility; his priestly office by his doctrine of human satisfactions and the sacrifice of the Mass; and his kingly office by his tyranny and usurpation, lording it over the consciences of men and the thrones of princes.

Certainly the Pope's claim of primacy, and to be the universal head of the Church, proclaims him to be the Antichrist if nothing else did.

3. Idolatry is the mark of the beast, and a grand character of Antichrist; and that the Romanists are guilty of the grossest idolatry, there needs nothing to prove, but to know what idolatry is, and how they practise.

Has not God strictly commanded, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve?* Matt. iv. 10. And is a bit of bread, an image, a crucifix, and old musty and perhaps counterfeit relique, the Lord our God? Did these make the Heaven and the Earth and all that in them is? Can they hear our prayers, and help and deliver us in
our

our dangers and distresses? A man must be stupid as the stones he bows down to, before he can believe this: and will a nonsensical distinction between *Dulia* and *Latria*, solve all? Or does it not show the impudence of *Solomon's* whore, in the *Proverbs*, that, when she had been playing the harlot, wiped her lips, and said she had done no evil?

Surely God must have given them strong delusions to believe a lye, or their consciences would fly in their faces, whenever they attend their accursed Idolatrous worship.

4. The mark, number, and name of the beast will point us to the true Antichrist in the highest and most special sense, *Rev. xiii. 16, 17, 18.*

The mark of the beast, I take to be a general corruption in doctrine, manners, and worship; more especially Pope *Pius* the fourth's new Creed, confirmed by the council of *Trent*, without acknowledging which, no man may buy or sell, or be in safety in Popish Countries, especially where the inquisition prevails.

Nay they have carried this so high, that in many places, if a man be but of a sober life and vertuous behaviour, especially if he reprove any for oaths and blasphemies, drunkenness and other immoralities, he is strait suspected for an Heretick, and many have been actually thus dealt withal, and sacrificed in the flames to the Roman *Moloch*.

As

As to the number and the name of it, it is of very difficult investigation, and will hardly be found out to satisfaction, till the event have further explained the prophecy; I shall content my self to say, that very learned and judicious expositors, have fixed upon the word *καθεὶς* as being the name, and containing the number of the name, viz. 666. in the numeral letters of it, and they calling themselves the *Latin Church*, it seems to agree very aptly to them.

5. The next character of Antichrist is a pretence to miracles, and the real effecting of many signs and lying wonders, *verse 9.*

The Papists frequently twit us with this, that their's must needs be the true Church, and that we are the false pretenders to Christianity; because they have many miracles frequently wrought in their Church, and we have none, nor indeed do we pretend to any, but we are not careful to answer them in this matter.

Miracles were necessary to confirm the Christian faith at its first appearance in the world: but now that it is spread and settled, there is no further any need or use of them; the miracles of Christ and his Apostles serve us for the confirmation of our faith, which is the same as their's, and we need no more, nor desire any other, for we should but hereby lay

lay our selves open to be imposed upon by crafty cheats and selfish designing men.

The Papists have saints for every day in the year, for every town, for every temple, for every trade, and miracles wrought at every shrine.

But their own wisest and best writers have been ashamed of them, they have carried so many marks of levity and folly, of trick and imposture, that they have been fitter to harden men in Atheism and Infidelity, than to profelyte them to the true faith and worship of God and the Redeemer.

Their wonders are lying wonders, either as writ by a lying spirit, or as being false feigned or counterfeited, or as being writ to confirm a lye, to promote error and deceit.

6. The next character of Antichrist, is bloody cruelty; and can we think of this and not know who is Antichrist? Have we forgotten the *Spanish Armada*? The powder plot? The *Irish* massacre? Have we no idea of the revocation of the edict of *Nants*, and the dragooning of our brethren that have fled to us for refuge? Is this an enemy to be handled with tenderness, and to be dealt gently with, and whose reputation must be screened and spared, or you are what? I will not say what; but surely you are no Protestants, if you can forget such things as these, which the

the whole world has been witness to, for these things were not done in a corner.

The last character I shall name, is luxury, wealth, pomp, and worldly grandeur, no marks to be sure of the chaste spouse of Christ.

A triple Crown, a court of Cardinals, a guard of Monks, Friars, and Jesuits; vast tracts of land, an usurped dominion over Princes; *vide an hac sit tunica filii tui?* Can this be the successor of him who had not where to lay his head? Are these the followers of the poor persecuted martyred fishermen? Mankind must be blind, or mad before they can take them to be the friends, much more the heads of Christianity.

Is this taking up the Cross and following Christ? Does any thing but infidelity, ambition, and a worldly spirit, need to make a man a profelyte to Rome? For a Protestant to become a Papist, seems to me to be like making a contract with the Devil: that so he may be safe and prosperous in this world, he will willingly, and chearfully, venture all eternity, and let what will come of his soul when he dies.

Horrid sottishness, and flat defiance to that of our Saviour, who has said, *Matt. xvi. 16. What is a Man profited, if he gain the whole World and loose his own Soul.* His own Soul, that dear pledge, which every
man

man ought to be careful of, whatever he neglect.

It now only remains, that I consider briefly the objections against this doctrine, by which the patrons of the wretched and desperate cause of Papacy, would ward off the mortal blow it gives them; and what cause is there so bad that a learned and ingenious man (bribed by interest and the hope of preferment) cannot say some thing for?

1. They say that Antichrist is a particular person who must be revealed very near the end of the world, when the Gospel had been every where preached, *Matt. xxiv. 2.* And the *Roman Empire* entirely abolished.

But alas! this salve will not heal the sore; for it is plain by the forementioned characters, that Antichrist is not a single person: that the seven heads spoken of in the *Revelation* are not particular persons; but several sorts of, or various successions in government. And as to the abolishing of the *Roman Empire*, it is done long agoe (in the sense the prophecy speaks of) for it is another and quite different *Roman Empire* that is sprung up in the room of that which long since ceased: naked assertions will never pass (with those who consider wisely, deliberately, and impartially) for conclusive arguments.

Nor

Nor must the last times be understood of the end of the world, but of the last state of things at large, *viz.* the Gospel dispensation.

2. But further, they say that Antichrist must continue but three years and an half, *Revelation* xii. 6. and chap. xiii. 5.

But it is certain, that in the prophetick stile, days, and months, and years, stand for a much longer period of time, than what is commonly noted by those terms; as is plain in *Daniel's* weeks.

All the events of that period cannot be brought within the compass of so short a time.

3. The fable that Antichrist must be a *Jew*, of the tribe of *Dan*, that he must rebuild the temple, restore the Jewish ceremonies, and worship, the sabbath, and circumcision, is objected against what I have been endeavouring to prove.

But where they learnt this, I believe they cannot themselves well tell us, and it will be time enough for us to believe it, when we find any sufficient evidence offered for it, which, I suppose, will not be soon produced.

But they plead that *Enoch*, and *Elias*, in their proper persons, must come before Antichrist, and testify against him, and be slain by him, and rise again: to this they apply the prophecy of the two witnesses, *Revelation* xi.

But

But this is as much a dream, as all the rest; the Scripture says nothing of *Enoch's* coming again into this world before the end of all things: and for *Elias*, our Lord himself hath told us, that *John Baptist* was he, not in Person, but one who came in his power, and spirit, *Matt. xi. 14.* and so fulfilled the prophecy of *Malachi*.

But Antichrist must be one that denyeth that Christ is come in the flesh, 1 *John ii. 19.*

I answer, that great truth may be denied, explicitly, or implicitly, by asserting things contrary to it; and in this latter sense Popery is a denial that Christ is come in the flesh; since it denys the sufficiency of his merits and satisfaction, which was the great end of his incarnation; besides, that the Antichrist is not there treated of, by the Apostle *John*, but his forerunners, and (as I may call them) his types: *Simon Magus*, *Cerintbus*, the *Gnosticks*, and other Hereticks of those early times.

But many of the Fathers understand these passages of *Caligula*, *Simon Magus*, *Apollonius*, *Domitian*, &c.

Ans. Be it so, they were not infallible, and it was easier to mistake in this matter, in their times, than it is now, when history has given so much light to prophecy, which they were necessarily strangers to.

A word

A word or two of use, shall finish this point.

1. The Protestants complied with a divine call, when they came out of *Babylon*, and seperated from an adulterous, and idolatrous Church.

2. Peace with *Rome* will hardly be had, because she pretends to infallibility, and yet is so horribly deceived, and adds cruelty to calumny.

3. We should choose to dye rather than symbolize with, or apostatize to the Romish Church; the Lord give us grace and strength, so to do whenever we are so tryed.

4. Let us labour to understand well our own, and their religion, and the grounds that both are built upon, that we may not be soon shaken in mind, nor become an easy prey to crafty seducers; but may glorify God by a faithful adherence to the truth, as it is in Jesus; the doctrine that is according to godliness. *Amen.*





DISCOURSE VIII.

Of Schism.

2 COR. vi. 17, 18.

*Wherefore come out from among them,
and be ye separate, saith the Lord,
and touch not the unclean thing;
and I will receive you, And will be
a Father unto you, and ye shall be
my Sons and Daughters, saith the
Lord Almighty.*

 HE words Separation and Schism,
have long made an unaccountable
Noise, and occasion'd a world of
clamour and calumny in the Chri-
stian Church.

That there is such a thing as Separation
every one sees, that there is such a sin as
Schism no one doubts.

I

That

That all Separation is not Schism, is plain and evident, tho' many talk, yea, and act too, as if they thought the quite contrary.

In all separations, the weaker party is sure to be called Schismatick, and often severely and injuriously treated as such: But while we have reasonable Souls, and open Bibles, none of these things need, or should, move us.

We ought to form our judgment of actions, from the nature of things, not from the harshness of names, and the impertinent and unproved clamours and accusations of enraged and self-interested factions.

To the law and to the Testimony, *Isa.* viii. 20. If the Scripture call any way, or practice Schism, avoid it; but if Fathers, or Councils, or persecuting Popes or Princes, set the odious Brand upon it without proof, be not prejudic'd against it, asham'd of it, or terrify'd from it upon that account.

The Papists charge the Protestants with the guilt of Schism, and too many Protestants (to the sport and hardening of the common Enemy, and the exposing and weakening themselves) throw the hard word in one another's faces, without fear or wit.

But it is not difficult (if men would be honest and impartial) to distinguish the real from the reputed schismatick.

Most

Most certainly, "Where there is most love, there is least Schism; and where there is most envy and hatred, and persecution, there is the most flagrant and exalted Schism."

For, Schism is an offence against love, and a breach of order, not humane, but divine. To hear a man curse, and see him burn another for a Schismatick, will never convince me that he who does such things is the Catholick; or that he who suffers them, is what he is called; and that the treatment he meets with, is that which he deserves.

The Scripture often calls us to Separation as a necessary duty, to come forth from among idolaters and profane persons, and be separate, 2 *Cor.* vi. 17. And to avoid all chosen voluntary society with openly and incorrigibly wicked men, 1 *Cor.* v. 11. We have then a divine warrant for withdrawing from corrupt and wicked societies, and we sin heinously if we do it not. And we ought to remember, and often to reflect on it, that our partaking in other mens sins, will involve us in their plagues; but if from conscientious principles, and with humility, and in the quietest and least provoking manner we can, we withdraw, tho' men reject us with rage and contempt, yet God will graciously receive us.

We ought therefore to be perswaded of it as a most certain truth, "That withdraw-
 "ment from idolaters and incorrigibly wick-
 "ed persons, and even from all in whose
 "communion we cannot continue without
 "sin, is no faulty, but a commendable Sepa-
 "ration." Such was the secession of our
 first reformers from the Church of *Rome*,
 such is that of any number of serious christi-
 ans, who are not suffered to enjoy commu-
 nion, in the particular churches where they
 live, on the terms which Christ and his A-
 postles have fixed, and which the holy Scrip-
 tures describe; especially where such things
 are required to be subscribed or practised by
 them, as they justly fear their compliance
 with, would in them be a downright sinning
 against their light, and a betraying the truths
 and rights of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the
 common Lord of all christians: this certain-
 ly is such Separation as (whatever men call
 it) is no Schism.

What is proper to be suggested on this
 great and needful point, both in relation to
 our Separation from the Church of *Rome*,
 and what ought to be our opinion of, and
 behaviour towards one another in the pre-
 sent lamentably divided state of the reformed
 Churches, both at home and abroad, I shall
 endeavour to comprise in the following

PROPOSITIONS.

I. The Church of *Rome* chargeth protestants with Schism, for departing from her communion and faith, that we thereby cut off our selves from the Catholick Church, of which we are no longer members. This point we shall freely yield them, whenever they can prove that the Roman is the Catholick Church, or (which is the same thing) that a part is the whole: Till then we despise the calumny, and deride the accusation as utterly groundless, and destitute even of the least shadow or semblance of truth.

He who believeth in Christ is a member of the Catholick Church, whether he hath ever heard of a man at *Rome* called the Pope, or no.

Hard words and strong arguments, are very different things, and do not often go together. If calling a man Schismatick or Heretick, and using him accordingly, would make him such, the patrons of persecution might have some excuse, but now they have no cloak for their sin, *Job. xv. 22.*

II. The Church of *Rome* is the most Schismatical Church in the world.

Have they not had (by the report of their own historians) no less than three Popes in the infallible chair at once, and they and

their followers dashing out one another's brains, to decide the important Question, Which of them should be the greatest?

Is there not a perpetual Schism in that Church, between the Assertors of the supremacy and infallibility of Popes on one side, and of councils on the other?

Are not they the worst and most notorious of Schismatics, who unchurch all Christians but themselves, like the *Donatists* of old?

Are not the *Jesuits* or the *Jansenists* Schismatics, tho' both *Romanists*? let themselves decide which, if they dare. They have indeed lately done it in *France*, to please their grand monarch, but their own prelates will not stand to the decision; and as that affair hath been manag'd with so manifest partiality, accompany'd with such furious and violent injustice, as gives hopes that many of the better sort there are opening their eyes, and begin to entertain better thoughts of our protestant reformation: sad would it be indeed, if any of us should at the same time be shutting our's, and be for entertaining more favourable thoughts of the abomination that makes desolate.

And as for those of the church of *Rome*, it is even monstrous to hear them continually crying out against all others as Schismatics, who know not how to agree in almost any thing

thing themselves, unless it be in devising and doing mischief.

III. In party-differences about ecclesiastical matters, he is not the Schismatick who peaceably withdraws, but he who ministers the occasion of such withdrawment.

Christ hath left us a rule, sufficient to keep us in love and concord, and to strengthen the bands of union and communion in each Church, and of Churches with one another; but if we will needs be wiser than he, and will make new terms of communion, that never came into his mind; no wonder if we break into atoms, and split into conventicles, and mutually bite and devour, till we are consum'd and destroy'd, one of another.

Christian faith, worship and practice, are plain intelligible things, as they lie in our Bibles; but when the gloss corrupts the text, and christianity is made a stalking-horse to secular interest and worldly grandeur, it cannot seem strange, if we soon hear of worse janglings than those in the church of Corinth, (which yet were bad enough of all conscience) where one said I am of *Paul*, another I am of *Apollo*, and a third I am of *Cephas*, 1 Cor. i. 12.

If men would study and practise christianity as a rule of living well on earth, and getting safe to Heaven, each one would have so much of his own concern to mind, that

he would have no leisure to give others any disturbance, much less would men so disposed and engaged, seek one another's ruin and destruction.

But when the name of Christ, the safety of the Church, the honour of the priesthood, are made stepping-stones to preferment, and shooing-horns to worldly wealth and grandeur; can any body be surprized to see men of sacred characters, but selfish and worldly spirits and tempers, scrambling (like beasts) for the prey, their eyes and their hearts are most entirely, and even ultimately fixed on?

The apostles themselves were forsaken by men like *Demas*, who lov'd this present world, 2 *Tim.* iv. 10. And even the apostle *John*, that so signal, and even almost singular, preacher and pattern of meekness and love, excommunicates and anathematizes *Diotrephes*, who thought he could be no bishop, unless he had the preheminance over his brethren, who were equal in office, and perhaps (some of them at least) superior in talents and qualifications to himself, 3 *Job.* ix.

IV. The last mentioned character of *Diotrephes*, is the very picture of the papal hierarchy, and of all other worldly clergymen; who by letting the spirit of the world into the Church, and indulging ambition and

and covetousness in themselves, do so far symbolize with the Antichrist.

I am no enemy to the dignities and revenues of a sober, humble, industrious and pious Clergy : But when Church-preferments rise to such an height, as to become the proper baits of pride and covetousness, no marvel if we see the worst men get into them, for usually (and according to the common course and train of things, in temporals as well as spirituals) they that seek do find : And thus the well-meant benefactions of our pious (but perhaps too superstitious) Ancestors, are perverted to support quite contrary principles and practices to those they design'd the encouragement of.

The papal Clergy teach men the way to Hell, instead of leading them in the way to Heaven. Consult but the catechism and canons of the council of *Trent* ; read but the mystery of jesuitism, the Jesuits morals, and the practical divinity of the Papists, and see if a wise honest man (if he had no better choice offered him) would not rather be an Infidel, than a Papist : For I dare say, “ It “ is a less crime to believe there is no Hea- “ ven, than to believe that the doctrine they “ teach is the way to it.

Can it be the way to Heaven, to believe that bread is God, and to worship it as such; that Princes are the Clergies slaves; that
Priests

Priests had better whore than marry; that if a Prince will not obey the Pope, a villain may merit Heaven by assassinating him? If this be indeed Christianity, and there be no wrong done to it, when such doctrines are made its essential character, who almost can forbear crying out with him of old, *sit anima mea cum Philosophis*, let my soul fare in the other world, as those of the honest Heathen sages, rather than take its lot with this new sect of Philosophers, who call themselves Christians, while they teach doctrines destructive of wisdom and piety, and utterly subversive of human society. *Socrates* and *Plato* were *Saints* and *Angels* to these pretended Christian Priests: They taught better morals, and they liv'd at a much better rate, than these pretenders to immediate revelation, and a divine commission do.

If any one had a mind to proselyte a man to infidelity, he could not take a shorter and surer way, than to bid him observe the doctrine and life of a Romish Priest, a Jesuit especially: And indeed their usual method of gaining men to their Church, is by first making them Infidels, Debauchees, or both: For it is certain he that is of no Religion, will ordinarily be of that which is uppermost, and in which he can enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, with least restraint or remorse, and secure the largest possessions of wealth, and

go

go out of the world with hope, that the prayers and suffrages of others, shall be available for him when he is dead. *Poperie* flatters the carnal mind too much, not to have many favourers and easy converts; especially when great ones connive at, or give it countenance; which has been our very case, pray God it may never be so again.

V. The true unity of the Church is exceeding valuable, and by no means to be causelessly violated.

But then we are to consider, that this unity is either internal or external; either of a particular Church within it self, or of the Catholick.

The internal and catholick unity is in faith, hope, love and obedience: And he who holds these (practically) cannot be cut off from the Catholick Church, no not tho' men call him Schismatick, and excommunicate, burn, and (so far as in them lies) damn him for such: He is yet a living member of Christ, and of his body the Church, and an heir of life and glory; and shall be conducted safe thither, in God's good time, after men have done their worst.

The external and particular unity is to be kept as far as may be without sin, and no needless breaches are to be made in it: But if men will devise Churches and forms of government, and ceremonies which our Bibles
say

say nothing of ; and will tell us that we shall have no communion with them, unless we will absolutely subject our selves to their will and pleasure in all such matters ; and that even tho' it be against our consciences, after we have taken the best care we can to inform them aright, from the word of God : If I say, men will deal with us at this rate, we will not (whatever provocation is given us so to do) either judge or despise them ; as neither can we approve them, and their ways : But (which is our wisest and safest course) we will leave them, and commit our selves to the judgment of God (which is always righteous and according to truth) nor do we doubt of a more favourable sentence at his bar, than we have met with at that of man, who after all is but our fellow-servant, and must himself shortly give an account of his stewardship to that God who is no respecter of persons, nor regards the rich, great and honourable more than the poor.

VI. There is a vast difference betwixt unity and uniformity ; the one is much more easy to be obtain'd, and much more worth obtaining than the other.

Causeless disputes about trifles multiply differences, and aggravate Schisms, and render them (for the most part) incurable : And the imposing Spirit (for which the Romanists have ever been the most notorious, tho' I doubt

doubt few parties even of Protestants, have wholly and at all times kept themselves free from so great a blemish) hath divided and distracted the Christian Church, more than any one thing besides. Weakness, peevishness, and undue scrupulosity are doubtless faulty, wherever they are really found, but they hurt a man's self more than any body else: Whereas the usurping God's Throne, and lording it over the consciences of men, tears all to pieces, and makes the Church a theatre, where prizes are fought for the lust of dominion, to the sport of Hell, and the grief of all who believe there is a God, and love and fear him.

Cannot a Man scruple a ceremony, but he must presently be railed at, and worry'd as a Schismatick? To those who use their weak, but conscientious brethren after this manner, we may well take up the words of our blessed Saviour to the Pharisees, Matt. vii. 5. *Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam that is in thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote that is in thy brother's eye.* The scrupling of a ceremony, can at most be but as a mote, while the sins of uncharitableness and persecution are first-rate iniquities, beams of a prodigious bulk, and sinking weight.

VII. Though *Bellarmino*, and others of his fraternity, assert the Pope to be the head and
cen-

center of Christian unity, yet we find no mention made of him, in those places of Scripture where one would most naturally have looked for him, if he had been to be found there, *viz.* neither in 1 *Cor.* xii. 28, nor in *Eph.* iv. 4, 5, 6, 11.

Had the Apostle *Paul* known of such an officer of Christ's appointing, he would not (on so fair occasions of mentioning him) have wholly drop'd him.

Would not an inspir'd Apostle, think you, have taken care to have prevented so many Schisms as have since arisen in the Church on that single point, especially when one word speaking would have done it; even mentioning the Pope as *Peter's* successor, next to the ordinary, and as head of the extraordinary Church-officers? This silence of his plainly proves "That either the Apostle did not faithfully discharge his trust, or the Pope is an usurper:" and I dare leave it to any honest man to judge, which of these is most like to be true.

VIII. True Christians have always separated from the Church of *Rome*, since she became Antichristian: Sometimes indeed more silently and privately, at other times more openly and publicly; but the usurping power of Popes, hath never been universally own'd in the Churches of Christ.

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The *Greek* Churches would never come into it, tho' flatter'd and threaten'd; here and there indeed a little sordid *Greek* Bishop, ground betwixt two mill-stones, hath paid his compliments to the Pope; but their conduct hath been always disallow'd, and themselves censur'd at their return, as betrayers of Christian liberty.

Every age hath produc'd witnesses to the truth of Christ, against the tyranny and usurpation of Antichrist: and at the reformation, a banner was display'd for all to resort to, who believ'd that Christ had a better right to rule them than the Pope.

It is therefore a very foolish question, that, with which they make so much noise: Where was your religion before *Luther*? The answer is plain and obvious, where their's never was: viz. in the Scriptures of truth, and in the hearts and lives of all real Christians.

We have no Christianity, but what the Apostles and primitive Christians had, and if they have no other, we and they are one, and the dispute is at an end: But let them shew it us in our Bibles, and by authentick testimony; and not appeal to blind traditions, in their own keeping, which no body knows any thing of but themselves; for it is too great imposition upon the reason and faith of mankind, to make themselves both parties and

and judges in the dispute betwixt us and them.

IX. The Reformed left the Romish communion on the most just, warrantable, and even necessary grounds. And this alone were sufficient to clear them from the charge, and free them of the guilt of Schism.

It would be too large a field of matter, to draw out at once the particulars of those grounds; It hath been often and unanswerably done already, by the learned *Chillingworth*, *Turretine*, the divines of the Church of *England* who wrote against popery in the reign of K. *James II.* and those learned and pious dissenting divines, who in the reign of K. *Charles II.* when there was no less need, and not much less hazard in such an undertaking, preached and printed their excellent morning-lectures against Popery: I shall only (as suits my present design) with the utmost brevity, hint the four or five particulars following;

1. The heresies taught in the church of *Rome*, made it necessary for us to withdraw from her communion, *Tit. iii. 10.* A man that is an heretick reject. If particular christians must avoid, and church-officers must excommunicate a known heretick, how much more must an heretical church be avoided by

by all that have any care of their souls, or value for their salvation?

‘ Heresy is any doctrine that overthrows the
‘ faith, and destroys the foundation of reli-
‘ gion, and the hope of salvation by Jesus
‘ Christ; especially if it be openly espoused,
‘ industriously propagated, and obstinately
‘ persisted in.

Now that all this is the true state of the case with relation to the Church of *Rome*, no man can doubt, who doth believe and will consult his Bible.

I shall only instance in their current doctrine of the meritoriousness of good works, and the necessity of human satisfaction; by which the great end of Christ’s death is set aside, and the necessity of faith in him (to which the scripture ascribes our justification before God) is over-turn’d.

If I can merit, if I can supererogate; what need of the blood of Christ to cleanse me from my sins, or purchase for me the crown of eternal life?

I may claim it as a just debt, and in strictest propriety say, even to God himself, Pay me that thou owest me. ‘ If we will not
‘ own this blasphemy, we are cast out of their
‘ Church; If we advance such a presumptu-
‘ ous plea, we shall be for ever shut out of
Heaven.

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2. We have left the communion of the Church of *Rome*, or continue the Separation of our Fore-fathers from her, because she is an idolatrous Church. For idolatry is utterly inconsistent with the being of a true Church, see 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. It is the breach of the oath and covenant that is betwixt God and his people; it is treason and rebellion against the supreme sovereign *Jehovah*; it is renouncing our allegiance to him, and interest in him; and consequently it depriveth us of the blessings, and exposeth us to his jealousy, his utmost wrath and vengeance. And we need but read the books, or see the worship of the Papists to prove them vile idolaters.

Dr. Stillingfleet, *Mr. Stopford* and others have proved this charge upon them, with that evidence which can never be reply'd to, unless railing, forgery, and impudence may pass for arguing and answering. Their bread, their saint, their image-worship, proclaim to all the world, that they are gross idolaters, if there be, or ever have been any such thing as idolatry among the children of men.

3. Their tyranny and persecution is enough to make us fly from them with Horror.

They will allow no communion with them without absolute subjection, and blind obedience to them. Where-ever they prevail, it is but
but

but a word and a blow. Bow the Knee, or bed the flames.

Rome Pagan never shed so much blood of saints and martyrs, as *Rome Papal* hath done; and that without any pity or mercy, or the least consideration of age or sex.

I would desire no greater evidence of the lawfulness, and even necessity of Separation from any Church, than if it can be made appear that she is, in principle or practice, much more if in both, for persecution.

God is love, and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him, 1 Joh. iv. 16. Whoso hateth his brother is a murtherer, 1 Joh. iii. 15. He that persecutes his brother, to be sure, hates him; and a Church of murtherers cannot be a fit subject for any true christian's communion.

4. The plain and full revelation of Antichrist, by, and since the reformation, makes it still more dangerous and damnable to continue in that communion, than it was before.

That the papal hierarchy is the Antichrist, foretold and described in the new testament prophecies, hath been the constant sentiment, and profession of the reformed Churches at home and abroad, till about the time of the late Archbishop *Laud*, when *Grotius* and Dr. *Hammond*, and some others thought fit to soften that article, and explain away the (till then, among Protestants,) receiv'd sense of it,

it, with what success, or on what views, I shall not say. But the homilies do often intimate, that the Pope is Antichrist, and sometimes expressly call him by that name, and in the prayer for the fifth of *November*, set forth by the authority of King *James I.* and his parliament, the Papists are call'd an Antichristian, and Babylonical sect; and we are requir'd to pray, that God would strengthen the hands of our gracious King, the nobles and magistrates of the land, with judgment and justice, to cut off these workers of iniquity, whose religion is rebellion, whose faith is faction, whose practice is murdering of souls and bodies, and to root them out of the confines of this kingdom.

A man who considers these passages, and the temper, language, and behaviour of many now a-days, will have much a-do to persuade himself, that we are the same *English* Church and nation now, that we were then: to be sure the compilers of the last mention'd prayer would not have express'd themselves in the fashionable cant of the present age, "that they would rather be Papists than Presbyterians."

The Articles of religion for the Church of *Ireland*, say expressly, that the Bishop of *Rome* is that man of sin foretold in the holy scriptures.

And

And that what they there say, is the very truth, hath been often and fully prov'd, by learned divines both of the *English* and *Foreign* reformed Churches; such as *Daneus*, *Turretine*, Bishop *Morton*, Bishop *Downham*, Dr. *H. More*, Dr. *Manton*, &c. So that I shall (as I think I well may) here take it for granted; on which supposition, it will be obvious to every one who duly and impartially considers the matter, that it must needs be the most horrid wickedness, not to come forth from the Church of *Rome*, not to separate our selves from her communion, or decline the having any share in their idolatrous worship.

The times of ignorance God might wink at; but now not to forsake Antichrist, is to rebel against Christ; and to stay in the *pur-lieux* of *Babylon*, is to entitle our selves to her plagues, which shall come upon her, certainly and suddenly, how much soever she now magnifyeth her self and liveth deliciously.

5. The incorrigibleness of the Church of *Rome* in her false doctrines, and false worship, maketh it necessary for all true Christians to forsake her communion, and that with a steadfast and unalterable purpose never to return any more to it.

Our Forefathers groan'd, pray'd, remonstrated, endeavour'd, and long waited for a reformation, but could not obtain it: since

therefore we would have heal'd *Babylon* and she is not heal'd, we are warranted to comply with the divine voice, *For sake her and let us go*, Jer. li. 9.

Why should we stay in a Church from which God is gone?

The pretence to infallibility, and their adding the new Creed of Pope *Pius IV.* to that of the Apostles, hath render'd the wound of mystical *Babylon* incurable; seeing therefore we cannot cure her, it concerns us to take due and timely care of our selves, that the infection may not reach and ruin us.

We judge not the eternal state of those who liv'd before us in that communion; that had not our light and means to answer for, we leave them to God: but by his grace we will not throw away our own souls, for fear of reflecting on their memories.

But say they, We have true baptism, and we retain the Apostles Creed; Why then do you forsake us?

To which this is a short, but sufficient reply; Because you say and do not; you give with one hand, and take with the other. Your new Creed is contrary to the old one, and we cannot hold both, (whatever you think you can do) and therefore we are firmly resolv'd to take and keep to the surer, the safer side.

And

And now what remains, but that knowing what is Schism, and what is not, we fear and fly from, not the name or unjust reproach of it, but the thing it self; and joyn heartily in affection and practice (and not only in words, which our deeds deny) in that petition of the publick Litany of the establish'd Church: *From all blindness of heart, from pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy, from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness; good Lord deliver us. Amen.*





DISCOURSE IX.

Of the marks of a true Church.

ACTS ii. 42.

*And they continued stedfastly in the
Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and
in breaking of bread and in prayers.*



WE shewed you the last time the warrantable and necessary reasons of our separation from the Church of *Rome*; as being an heretical, idolatrous, tyrannical, and Anti-christian Church.

We are now to consider the difference between a true and a false Church; how the one may and ought to be distinguished from the other; and this will farther justify our separation from that Synagogue of Satan, and fortify us against any thought of a return to it, whatever we may loose or suffer for our faithfulness to our light herein.

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The words I have read to you, contain a description of the pure, primitive, Apostolick Church; the first and best of the New Testament times, though small in number, yet sound and strong in faith; patient in tribulation; warm in their love to each other; ready to, and fruitful in every good work.

They believed as the Apostles taught; worshiped as they directed; did as they saw them do; and to what degree soever any particular Church of later times keeps up to this pattern, by so much the more evidently may it be concluded to be a true Church, and the more confidently may we reckon on it, that we shall experience the divine presence and blessing in our adherence to it, and communion with it.

The point I shall speak to is, That sound faith, pure worship, brotherly love, and order in Government without tyranny, are the surest and best notes of a true Church; and the contrary characters mark out to us false Churches, whose communion is carefully to be avoided by us, as we would not be partakers with them in their sins and plagues.

The Papists (and particularly their great *Goliath* Card. *Bellarmin.*) make a huge noise and dust, about the notes and marks of a true Church.

And a vast deal of pains that learned champion of their's has bestowed to gild a rotten post,

post, and represent the mother of Harlots and abominations as the chaste spouse of Christ: but as a clear eye and a steady attention will quickly distinguish between a native and a counterfeit beauty, between natural complexion and colours laid on by art; so it is in the present case.

An honest inquirer will not easily be imposed upon by the meretricious bravery of the *Roman* strumpet, but will fall in with the natural plainness of the real spouse of Christ, and not be decoyed by the pomp and paint of an Harlot, that makes her self fine only to deceive and destroy.

I shall proceed in handling the point under consideration by the following steps.

1. Every man ought to enquire carefully which is the true Church, and to take great heed to what society of Christians he joyns himself, and holds Communion with, as such: for if we are in the Communion of a false Church, we run a great hazard of our salvation; for so our Saviour assures us, that they do in vain worship God who teach (and consequently learn and practise) for Doctrines the Commandments (or devices and inventions) of men, *Mat. xv. 9.* If the blind lead the blind, both the leader and he that is led, fall into the ditch, *Mat. xv. 14.*

It is a great evidence of the luke-warmness in Religion that abounds among us at this day, that

that men are so indifferent and thoughtless about what Communion they joyn themselves to for ordinary stated worship; very few, either in the establish'd Church, or out of it, being able to give any good and sufficient reasons, why they prefer the Communion they frequent, to that which they relinquish; but are led in all they do in matters of this nature, by chance, custom, or interest, not by rational and religious choice, as every one should be, in matters so nearly concerning the loss or ruin of a precious and immortal Soul.

2. Out of the Catholick Church there is no salvation; for Christ is the Saviour only of his body, *Eph. v. 23.* but then the Catholick Church comprehends all true believers in Christ, and only them, (I speak of adult persons) but a man may be a believer in Christ, and so in a state of salvation, who is not a member of this, or that particular Church, nor perhaps (as things may sometimes fall out, though it cannot be so ordinarily) of any.

We are not therefore here inquiring of the Catholick Church, but of particular, and even contending ones, which is the true Church.

3. A Church may be a true Church, in which there are many faults and defects, or else it would be hard (if not impossible) to find a true one upon earth; and usually those
Churches

Churches that are fullest of boasts, are fullest of faults: so that in this inquiry, we are not to be led aside by noise and self-applause, accompanied with decrying and calumniating of others.

The Church of *Rome* (the worst, that calls it self Christian in the whole world) makes the loudest boasts of Catholicism, Unity, Infallibility, Purity, and what not: but we are not to believe her upon her own word, and if we impartially try, we shall never believe her at all.

4. When therefore among many pretenders, we are searching which is the true Church to which we should join our selves, we must see that the marks we would try by, be such as may be more easily and surely known by us, than the thing we are inquiring after, else we bewilder our selves, and lose our time and labour.

5. Therefore the marks of the true Church must be few and plain.

Bellarmino cou'd not have done his Church a greater spite or mischief, than by reckoning up no less than fifteen marks, by which to try which is the true Church: for some of them do not agree to her; others of them would not prove her a true Church, if they did; and almost all of them are such as go upon the supposition of her being the only true Church, which is the very thing in debate;

bate; so that instead of defending his Church, he has exposed her to the insults of Atheists, Deists, Infidels, and those he calls Hereticks.

6. This will appear, if we consider, though very briefly (as the nature of the present exercise will allow) each of them apart.

1. He tells us that the title and appellation of the Catholick Church, shows the *Roman* to be the only true one.

But 1. It is not the name, but the thing that we are enquiring after: we profess in the Creed, to believe the Catholick Church; but not that every Society that is called Catholick, is really such.

2. It is very easy for any man, or body of men to give themselves a good name; but that will never establish a solid reputation among able and impartial judges. *Laodicea* and others have cried up themselves for the best constituted Church in the world, that have been never the nearer the thing for their confident boasts, and self-assumed titles.

3. The Christian Church is stiled Catholick in contradistinction to the *Jewish*, which was confin'd to one particular nation and people, the descendants of *Abraham* after the flesh; whereas now the Church is not limited to any one nation or tongue, or people; but this gives no particular Christians privilege, much less authority over others.

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4. In the ecclesiastical writers, a particular Church is sometimes call'd Catholick, in respect to the orthodoxy of its sentiments, and the conformity of its Doctrine, with that of Christ and his Apostles; but this will do the Church of *Rome* no service, whose Doctrines are infinitely wide of, and often directly opposite to those of the first founders of Christianity.

5. If this were a true note of the Church, the *Greek* Church might put in as fair, yea and a fairer title to it than the *Roman*; for she is as much Catholick in the mouths of her Doctors, as that of *Rome* is in those of her's.

6. If the Church of *Rome* were once a truly Catholick, *i. e.* orthodox Church, it does not follow she is so now: once indeed her faith was spoken of throughout all the world, *Rom.* i. 8. but now the City of righteousness is become an Harlot, and the primitive faith is changed among them into an heap of absurdities, contradictions, blasphemies; their worship is polluted with worse than *Paganish* Idolatries; their lives are deformed with the grossest impurities; and all *Europe* rings with their horrid cruelties and impatient thirst after innocent blood.

2. *Bellarmino's* next note of a true Church is antiquity.

Certain indeed it is, that truth is older than a lye, since this is a corruption of, or a de-

deviation from that: but yet a lye may be old enough to impose upon him, who looks no further than antiquity for a mark of distinction between them.

The Devil seduced our first parents by a lye; therefore a lye is near as old as the world, yet I hope never the truer for that.

Again the true Church was not always ancient; for there was a time, when it first began; therefore antiquity can be no certain note of the true Church. The Jewish Synagogue was older than the Gospel-Church, and yet not truer than it.

The Heathens made much use of this argument, against the primitive Church, and boasted highly of it; and the answers of the fathers, in their apologys against them, are of equal force on our behalf, against the Papists.

That only is new in Christianity, which Christ and his Apostles never taught: our's therefore is the old Religion, and Popery, wherein it differs from us, a meer Novelty.

The Churches of *Jerusalem*, and *Antioch*, are evidently older than that of *Rome*: therefore, according to themselves, antiquity alone can be no certain mark of the true Church.

3. *Bellarmino* makes perpetual duration a note of the true Church.

But if we allow of this, it could be of no use to discover the true Church; because
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it could not be determined of, till the end of time, and the dissolution of all things: and then it comes to late, it will be to no purpose to enquire which is the true Church, when all the members of it are perfected and got safe together in Heaven.

Besides, this is a note or privilege of the universal Church, *Matt. xiv. 18.* but it can be none of a particular Church, much less of the Church of *Rome*, being the true Church; since though it may continue a long time, yet Christ hath promised he will destroy Antichrist with the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming, *2 Thess. ii. 8.* and that voice of triumph shall be heard in the Churches, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen, and shall arise again no more, Revelation xviii. 2, 21.*

Further, the church of *Rome*, has already actually failed, and ceased, as a christian Church, and is turned into an earthly monarchy of the Pope, wherein all things are managed after the manner of absolute tyranny, and not after the rule, and example, of Christ and his Apostles.

4. Another note of the Church, according to him, is the great number, and vast multitude, of profelytes to, and professors of, the Romish Religion.

But how then came our Saviour to call his Church, a little flock? *Luke xii. 32.* and

to

to exhort us to enter in at the strait gate, and walk in the narrow way, which few do find? *Matt. vii. 13.*

Why are we told of the world's wondering after the beast? *Revelation xiii. 3.* why are we forbidden, *Exod. xxiii. 2.* to follow a multitude to do evil?

By this mark in *Elijah's* time the worshippers of *Baal* must have been the true Church. *1 Kings xviii. 22.*

If the Question, Which is the true Church, must be determined by majority of voices, the judgment will be very partial, and uncertain, and the best cause will have the worst doom: for it was hardly ever yet so well with mankind, as that truth should be on the side of numbers; the wise, and the honest are very frequently the smallest number, both in civil, and ecclesiastical societies.

5. The next note they give us of the true Church, is a personal lineal succession of Bishops in the same Roman see, down from the Apostles time, to the present days.

But against this, many things may fairly be objected, that can never be clearly, and fully answered; as,

1. They will not admit of such a succession, as a valid proof on behalf of other Churches, who lay as fair a claim to, and make as great boasts of it as the Romish Church;

Church; but call and count them Hereticks and Schismatics notwithstanding.

Thus they deal with the other Patriarchal Sees of *Antioch*, *Alexandria* and *Constantinople*: now if this be no good plea for them, why should it be admitted for such only, when urged in behalf of the Church of *Rome*?

2. Neither can a personal Succession avail any thing without a doctrinal one; if they have chang'd the doctrine taught by the Apostles, tho' they could prove every link of their personal Succession (which yet they can never do) it would be to no purpose.

For there only is the Apostolical Church, where the Apostolical Doctrine is heard; there is the true Church, where the Gospel of peace, and the glad tidings of good things is preached, *Rom. x. 15*. Not where consciences are perplex'd, and men are taught to rely on their own merits, and other Saviours and Mediators are set up in opposition to, or competition with our Lord Jesus Christ, as they are in the Church of *Rome*.

3. The notes of the true Church must be such, as ordinary people and men unlearned can judge of; but such is not this: for a man must have read the fathers, and Church-history, before he can tell whether the pretended succession has any thing in it or no.

4. Who

Who can tell whether in so long a succession, no one has enter'd in by bribery, and simony, or has been an Heretick, or an Infidel; and if but one such has sat in the infallible chair from *Peter* to the present *Pope*, the web of succession is intirely unravelled.

And this we know in their case to be true; for *Pope Liberius* was an *Arian*; *Honorius* a *Monathelite*; and *Pope John* the 23d denied the immortality of the soul.

5. The impudent wretches are at a loss about the first link of their succession; some placing *Linus*, others *Clemens*, others *Cletus* or *Anaoletus*, next after *Peter*: a goodly chain of succession, where the first successor cannot be found, or with any certainty determined.

6. If *Clemens* or *Linus* immediately succeeded *Peter*, they must (according to them as being head of the Church) be above the Apostles, *James*, and *John*, who were then living; which is a most gross absurdity.

7. The enemies of truth have always been wont to puzzle the minds, and perplex the consciences of weak believers, with specious cavils about the mission of their ministers; thus the *Jews* treated *John* the Baptist, and our Saviour himself.

But it is enough in such cases, to be satisfied of the truth of the doctrine that is taught, and the Sacraments that are administer'd, and

to experience the presence and blessing of Christ with his own ordinances; and then the defects in the call of any shall not prejudice the faith and salvation of those, who sincerely depend upon the chief shepherd and bishop of our souls, the Lord Jesus Christ, 1 *Pet.* v. 4.

6. The next note of the true Church is a consent in doctrine with the fathers, and primitive writers of the Church.

But 1. This is a meer shift to decline the trial of their Doctrines by the Holy Scriptures.

2. The fathers were many of them wise and good men, but none of them infallible. 3. How can the common people consult the fathers, to know whether the Church of *Rome* agree with them or no? Can they read *Greek* and *Latin*? Will the business of their particular callings allow them to read, and weigh, and judge of whole Cart-loads of huge volumes, which men of the greatest leisure and industry can hardly find time for? 4. A little taste of that learning, by going no farther than the three first centuries, will enable a man to see the craft and treachery of the Papists in appealing to the fathers, when they are contradicted by them in almost every line. 5. The Romanists will never allow the fathers to judge against the present Roman Church; why then should their testimony be admitted, when it seems to make for them? 6. They have corrupted

rupted the fathers writings after a most shameless manner, as our Doctor *James*, Doctor *Andrew Rivet*, and others have largely and learnedly proved beyond all contradiction. 7. The true Church was extant long before most of the fathers, therefore a fit consent with them, can be no fit mark to find it out by. 8. The fathers often differ among themselves, and contradict one another; who then shall decide which of them is in the right?

7. Their next mark is union with the head, and among the members.

But hereby they mean not Christ and his true followers, but the Pope and his subjects, or slaves rather; but this in their sense is rather a mark of a false Church, than of the true.

Their union is not in faith and holiness, but in rebellion against Christ; it is a wicked conspiracy, no commendable agreement.

Besides, that their differences among themselves are notorious and flagrant.

They cannot agree in whom their *Diana* of infallibility (for which they so eagerly contend) is seated: but I must hasten.

8. They mention holiness of Doctrine, as a mark of the true Church.

But then we must take that way of trial (which they so loudly protest against) to see which doctrine is holy, their's or our's, holy in it self, and fit to make men holy.

But indeed they had much better have let this mark alone; so many of their doctrines being at first sight absurd and wicked, and fit to spread and encourage all manner of abominations in the world.

Their ninth mark of the true Church is miracles.

They were necessary for the confirmation of the Gospel at first; but now, that the Canon of Scripture is sealed, and the Gospel has been preached, and Churches settled in most parts of the world, the pretence to them smells rank of imposture and a knavish design: Antichrist was to come with lying wonders, 2 *Thess.* ii. 9. And the wisest and most learned among the Papists are ashamed of their false pretences to frequent miracles, as being meer tricks of their Priests, to uphold their image-worship, and chouse the ignorant among the laity of their money.

Their tenth note is the efficacy of their doctrine.

But this is the fruit of God's giving them up to strong delusion to believe a lye, that they might be damned, as was foretold, 2 *Thess.* ii. 11, 12.

They make few Profelytes but by fraud and force; gibbets, and halters, and racks, and flames are their strongest arguments.

They next plead the holiness of the Authors, Patrons, and Propagators of their Religion:

gion: but this is a downright impudent plea, since infidelity and all manner of pollutions reign at *Rome*; and their Popes have many of them been monsters rather than men, much less Christians or Saints.

They further plead the gift of prophecy, as a mark of the truth of their Church: all I shall say to that, is, that their own authentick histories assure us they have had several conjurers, but no true Prophets in the Roman Chair.

In the 13th place, *Bellarmino* urgeth the confession of adversaries concerning the truth and holiness of their Church; but where he will find such confessions, I know not; remonstrances of a contrary nature are easy enough every where to be met with.

He also tells us of the miserable ends of those that have opposed the Roman Church, as *Luther*, *Calvin*, *Beza*, &c. but they are all stories of their own forging; for those holy men lived to the Lord, and died peaceably in him.

And for his last note of outward felicity, it were fitter to have been mentioned by a *Pagan* or a *Turk*, than one who calls himself a Christian; since they who are really such, must expect through much tribulation to enter into the kingdom of Heaven, *Acts* xiv. 22.

I conclude therefore that the true Church is to be known chiefly by the soundness of Doctrine, and next to that, by the due use of Sacraments, and by the concord and holiness of its members, and the efficacy of the divine Spirit accompanying his ordinances.

Therefore 1st. Let us not wonder after the beast.

2. Let us not waver in scepticism and uncertainty.

3. Let us prove all things, and hold fast that which is good

4. Let us approve our selves true Christians, and then God will not leave us dangerously or finally to err about which is the true Church, John vii. 17. *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of my self.*



D I S-



DISCOURSE X.

Of religious worship due only to God,
not to Saints and Angels.

MATT. iv. 10.

*Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee
hence Satan : for it is written, Thou
shalt worship the Lord thy God, and
him only shalt thou serve.*



HIS Chapter begins with an account of our Saviour's temptation in the wilderness, immediately before his entrance on his publick ministry.

Christ underwent this temptation, partly for our direction, and partly for our encouragement : his conquest was for us.

In the foregoing *verse*, the enemy would have had him fall down and worship him ; but he rejects the motion with disdain and abhorrence, Get thee behind me Satan.

It

It was insufferable insolence in the Prince of darkness to require homage of the Lord of life and glory.

This was a temptation not to be parlied with, but to be resented and repelled at the first offer: What! the son of God worship his enemy! The saviour of men fall down before their destroyer and murderer! This was not once to be listen'd to, but chid away into Hell from whence it came.

But our Lord does not only rebuke the adversary, but confute him, and that by plain positive Scripture, it is written, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

The Scripture is the sword of the Spirit, and with it we must defend our selves against spiritual wickedness in high places, *Eph. vi. 17.*

Our Lord quotes this out of *Deut. x. 20.* but follows the septuagint rather than the original *Hebrew*, as the Apostles sometimes do; not that the former is more authentick, but the other was then in common use, and though the word *only* be not expressly in the *Hebrew*, yet it is virtually; if we truly fear, and serve the Lord, and cleave to him; this will infer our cleaving to, and trusting in, and worshipping him only.

For in those acts we honour him as a God, and therefore this honour cannot without

out sacrilege and idolatry be communicated to any other.

God will be worshipped only, or he cannot at all be worshipped acceptably by us, *1 Sam. vii. 3.* He will not give his glory to another, nor his praise to graven images, *Isaiah xlii. 8.*

This prohibition relates both to inward and outward worship; the reverence of the heart and the adoration of the body; these must be kept sacred to God, and we must not worship any other, either with our souls or bodies, but glorify him in our bodies, and in our spirits which are his, *1 Cor. vi. 20.*

So that all homage and worship of creatures is here expressly forbidden: not indeed civil respect, but whatever in its nature is, or in common construction is accounted religious worship, as praying to them, bowing before them, building Temples to them, &c.

The point to be briefly considered at this time is,

That religious worship is due only to God, and is not to be paid to Angels, Saints, or any other creature. Here,

1. Worship in general is an acknowledgment of apprehended excellency or superiority in another; it imports inward esteem and the outward expression of it.

2. This Worship is either civil or religious.

Civil

Civil respect is due to our fellow-creatures by the fifth Commandment, and that according to the degree of worth that is in them, and the relation they stand in to us; but religious worship is appropriate unto God by the first and great Commandment, as also by the second, and indeed by all the precepts of the first table of the divine law.

3. Religious worship is to be considered, either in relation to the object we refer it to, or the means we make use of in it.

Now the lawful object of worship, is only the living and true God, who made the heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is: when we direct our worship to any other object, we are guilty of idolatry against the first Commandment.

Nor are we thus guilty, only when we worship a creature, as if it were, or as thinking it to be God; but also when we worship God in, or by, or through that creature; as in the case of the *Jews* worshipping the golden calf and the brazen serpent, &c. They did not think those to be God, but they thought they honoured God by worshipping before them as symbols of him.

This is worshipping God by an undue mean, and in an undue manner, and is idolatry by the second Commandment, of which the Papists are most notoriously guilty in their worship of Angels, Saints, Images, &c.

4. Whe-

4. Whether worship be civil or religious, may be known by the circumstances, the place, end, &c. as Dr. *Manton* judiciously observes, it is one thing to bow the knee in salutation, another to bow down in prayer in a temple before an Image.

5. That worship is due to God, is clear by the light of nature, the testimony of Scripture, and the concurrent harmonious consent and practice of all Nations in all times and ages; the exceptions being so few, remote, doubtful, and of such only as are sunk into meer brutes, that if there be any, it is of no weight against the bulk of mankind, and especially the wisest and best of them.

John iv. 24. God is a spirit, and they that worship him, must worship him in spirit and in truth. We are there directed how to worship God, but it is supposed as a common notice that he must be worshiped by us.

He is a rebel against God, and deserves to be exil'd from human society, that pays no worship to the author of his being.

They that call not upon God, do in effect say there is no God, *Psalms xiv. 1.* neglect of worship evidenceth Atheism and encreaseth it.

And this consideration should greatly enforce the practice, not only of publick, but especially of secret worship, wherein we do
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in a peculiar manner ascribe to God the honour of his omniscience and omnipresence.

6. We must not only worship God, but we must serve him; internal worship is the first and main homage we owe to God; but it must not exclude, but be expressed by that which is external. God has not only made us these souls, but he has formed our eyes, our ears, our hands, our knees; and they also must express the sense we have of him, and how deeply it is rooted and riveted in our souls.

An irreverent worshiper, I doubt, will prove an Atheistical one. The Lord is a great King, *Malachi* i. 14. If men visibly trifle in the presence of God, as they would not dare to do in that of an earthly monarch, they make it too plain, that how near soever he is in their mouths, he is far from their Reins, *Jeremiah* xii. 2.

We must not only believe with the heart, but confess with the mouth, *Rom.* x. 9, 10. Inward affections must be expressed by suitable actions, and an obedient holy life must be the proof of the reality and cordialness of that service which we pay to God.

7. Religious worship and service is due to God, and to him only exclusive of all others. For,

1. Religious worship is due to God as God, and therefore cannot be applied to any other, without calling his Deity in question, being

being guilty at once of the utmost sacrilege and the grossest Idolatry, Psalm xlv. 11. *For he is thy Lord, and worship thou him.* To worship a creature is to acknowledge another Lord, which is to violate our covenant with God, and incur the guilt of spiritual adultery; therefore the *Galatians* are so severely charged for doing service to them that by nature are no Gods, *Gal.* iv. 8.

Nothing can with any shadow of reason be worshiped that is not God by nature; and hence it is we assert our Lord Jesus Christ to be God by nature, because else we could not justify our worshiping of him, which yet is plainly enjoined us; and one Scripture cannot contradict another.

2. Religious worship implies dependance, subjection, self-dedication: and these are things too great to be given to any meer creature.

Hence *Thomas* cries out with so vehement affection, *My Lord and my God*, John xx. 28. He that is not my God, cannot be my Lord and Saviour.

By our worship we acknowledge the great attributes of omniscience, omnipresence and omnipotence; and none but one in whom these meet, is fit to be prayed to. He must see us, be with us, and be able to help us, or we call and cry to him in vain, and are in as bad a condition as *Baal's* worshipers, when they cut and flayed themselves, and cried
out

out from morning until noon, *O Baal bear us*, 1 Kings xviii. 26.

3. We have no precept, promise, or example in Scripture to encourage us to worship any but God only; not one text for worshipping Saints or Angels; and that worship that has no word of God to direct it, cannot be performed in faith, and so there is no manner of ground to hope it shall be accepted.

4. God has over and over forbid all creature-worship, and threaten'd to express his utmost resentment against all those that are guilty of it.

See the first and second commandment; he has declared himself a jealous God, and that he will visit Idolaters to the third and fourth generation; and in the third commandment he has declared, he will not hold them guiltless who take his name in vain, as most certainly they all do who join any other name with his, and make any meer creature the object of their worship.

Exodus xxxiv. 14. For the Lord whose name is jealous, is a jealous God.

What daring madness then is it in the Church of *Rome*, to run upon the thick bosses of his buckler, as if they were a match for the Almighty; as they most notoriously do in exalting meer creatures to a partnership with him in prayer, prostrations,

ons, vows, self-dedications, consecrating temples to them, &c. Therefore by way of use,

I. Let us see that we make conscience of worshiping God, and that in spirit and in truth; O! let not any of us dare any longer (whatever we have hitherto done) to live as without God in the world.

Do not restrain prayer before him; O watch against that spirit of atheism which is so common in the world, even under a form of godliness and some kind of profession of religion.

How many among us turn their backs on the publick worshiping assemblies, or attend them after so cold and careless a manner, that they had almost as good keep wholly away?

How many come late to publick worship and seem scarce to think it a fault? how many sleep or gaze away their time there? Little of the awe of God is visible in our solemn assemblies! how many come into them rather to show themselves than to see and honour God and have communion with him! how quickly are some tired of a prayer or a sermon, and how many unduly admire or despise the preacher, as if they came to judge rather than to be judged? If these remarks are just (and I leave you to judge whether they are or not) I fear God is about to call our name *Ichabod*, our glory is departing,

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and

and alas ! in a great measure gone already.

Again, What is become of family religion among us? Are there none that come to such places as this on the Lord's day, of whom God hears nothing all the week besides? Is reading of the Scriptures, catechizing of children and servants, praying in and with our families with constancy and seriousness, the practice of the generality of those that now-a-days call themselves Christians, or even of communicants and Church members? Would to God it were.

What will become of the interest of Religion among us, my friends, if one half of our auditories (and that the bigger half) are non-communicants, and the other half have little or no serious family-religion?

Did christianity at first make its way into the world, and fix and spread upon such terms, and in such ways and methods as these?

If family-religion revive not, God may justly leave us and our posterity to worship saints and angels, stocks and stones, and we should on that supposition hardly change for the worse, unless Idolatry, as bad as it is, could be proved to be worse than downright Atheism.

If we are got to such horrid lukewarmness and indifferency in Religion, there may
be

be need of persecuting flames to re-kindle our zeal and rouse us out of our lethargy.

Further, Do not think you can do any thing to purpose in publick or family-worship, unless you keep up closet-religion too, and that in a lively serious manner, *Matt. vi. 6.*

Without this our spirits will freeze, and our walk will be unsteady, and perhaps in a while scandalous, and we shall be in danger of open, total, final apostacy.

He that worships God in spirit will worship him in solitude.

The most intimate and influential communion with God is often in secret.

If our worship grow more constant, warm and lively, our hearts will be bettered, our lives will be amended, judgments will be warded off, blessings will attend us; but if we chuse to say to God, depart from us, can we wonder if he make our choice our doom, and turn the *depart* upon us, and say, his soul shall be avenged on us, and his spirit shall strive no more with us?

2. This shows us the horrid Idolatry of the Papists in their angel-worship and saint-worship.

Wherever idolatry prevails, satan reigns, and that he does now no less among the Papists than he heretofore did among the Pagans.

Rome Papal is as full of Idolatry as Rome Pagan was.

Wherever you see an object of worship that is not God, there you see an idol; and if that be true, there is no looking off them so much as in passing through Romish Countries.

They worship saints and angels in defiance of the expresse command of God, that they should worship and serve him only.

We deny not that Angels are to be honoured by us, that is, we are to think highly of them as an excellent order of beings, as excelling in strength and wisdom, and holiness, as the faithful servants of God and our Redeemer, as those that long for our salvation, and minister to it; we ought to endeavour to do the will of God as they do it, to hold communion with them as hoping one day to be joined to an innumerable company of angels in the divine blessed blessing presence.

But still we are not to give them any religious worship. For this is expressly forbidden, Col. ii. 18. *Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, &c.* So Rev. xix. 10. and xxii. 9. *See thou do it not.*

Further, it would be to ascribe the honour peculiar to God to them, to suppose that

that they heard and could answer our prayers, they must then be every where, and know all things and be Almighty.

Again, There is no example of, nor warrant for such a practice, in Scripture, and all primitive antiquity was against it.

And the like considerations and arguments will hold against the worship of saints departed.

We are to have no other Gods before, or besides *Jehovah*, Exodus xx. 3. It is will-worship, God has no where enjoined it, nor have we any warranted example of it in Scripture.

We may not believe on them, and therefore we may not call upon or pray to them.

This indeed would be downright idolatry, *Rom. x. 14. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?*

They are no mediators for us (*For there is but one God and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, 1 Tim. ii. 5.*) therefore we may not set them up for, or use them as such.

Further, the Saints that are worshiped in the Church of *Rome* must be first canonized by the Pope: but there is no warrant for such a practice, and it is performed with ridiculous ceremonies and with a covetous design.

Besides, that many of their Saints are meer names of persons that never had a being, some

of them have been abominably wicked, such as our *Thomas a Becket*, &c.

There are no more footsteps in primitive antiquity of saint, than of angel-worship.

And the best men in the Church of Rome it self have from time to time vehemently complained of these abuses, as *Espenceus*, *Vives*, *Cassander*, &c.

And further, their pleas for it are so weak and foolish, that to recite is to confute them.

Their distinction of *Dulia*, *Hyperdulia*, and *Latria*, will stand them in no stead, since the words *Dulia* and *Latria* are used in the same sense, both in Scripture and other writers, and the one is no more appropriated to God than the other.

They say we desire our fellow-saints here on earth to pray for us; therefore we may pray to Saints and Angels in Heaven to pray for us: but there is no consequence in this argument, because the cases are not parallel, we are commanded to pray one for another, &c.

Besides, they do more than pray, the Saints to pray for them, they seek for pardon and salvation by their merits; as their books of devotion plainly show: and desire the *Virgin Mary*, in the right of a mother, to command her son to be propitious to us.

Some of them quote *Job* v. 1. *To which of the Saints wilt thou turn?* But that has no

reference to Saints departed, but to the experience and suffrage of living ones.

But I will not insist farther on the point, but conclude with a third use, and that is, to press us to flee from idolatry, and to keep far from this evil matter.

If we pray to God with faith and fervency in the name of Christ Jesus, he can and will hear and help us; but if we pray to Saints and Angels, we know not how far off they may be from us, or whether they know any thing at all of us and our affairs.

We have no warrant to set up to our selves mediators of intercession, no more than of redemption.

Be content not to be wise above what is written.

Whatsoever we ask in Christ's name, we have a promise we shall receive it, *John xvi. 23, 24.* But not so of what we ask of *Gabriel* or *Raphael*, of *Peter* or *Paul*, or the *Virgin Mary*, much less of *Thomas a Becket*, *St. George*, *St. Christopher*, &c. We have a plain direct way lying before us, let us not tire our selves with going round about in vain, and to no purpose.

M 4 D I S-

DISCOURSE XI.

Of Purgatory.

REV. xiv. 13.

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: yea, saith the spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

THE book of *Revelations* is on all hands allowed the most difficult in all the Bible. The prophecies of it (many of them at last) are extremely obscure, and not to be unriddled 'till time give light to them, and the spirit of God do peculiarly assist those who are engaged in the study thereof.

Which we may reasonably suppose he has done, and will do according as the accomplishment

plishment of the several visions and predictions draw nigh.

That wise and good men have been greatly mistaken in their conjectures hereupon, is certain, but should be no discouragement from a sober, modest, diligent, and impartial enquiry into the sense and meaning of this blessed book.

Only we should be careful that we do not too soon, nor over confidently determine.

But this book also abounds with moral and divine instructions: lessons that are as plain as they are useful, which therefore we should chiefly pitch our thoughts and enquiries upon.

The words I have read, have some difficulty in them; but their main scope and design is plain and obvious, *viz.* to encourage Christians to patience in suffering, from the consideration of the glory that is shortly to be revealed.

This chapter relates to the last and most violent persecutions to be inflicted by the Antichristian state on the truly Christian Church, *morsus morientium canum sunt rabidissimi*: when this time comes the Church is to suffer the sharpest conflict; but it will be but short, for this severity is introductive of the utter ruin and abolition of Antichrist.

Against Hell.

Against this we are here comforted by the consideration of the happiness of those who are housed before the storm come, and the blessedness we shall enjoy as soon as it is over, if we are found faithful.

The point I shall at present speak to, is this.

That the souls of believers immediately upon their death are unspeakably, and shall be everlastingly glorious and happy.

They have no Purgatory to expect, but do sleep in Jesus, rest from their labours and their works follow, or rather accompany them.

I would here hint the following things, with respect to the state of souls separate, and the absurd fancy of the *Papists* concerning Purgatory.

1. All who die, as soon as they die are immediately in Heaven or Hell.

That we all must die, we all know, would to God we more thought of it and were better prepared for it; a liableness to death is not the condition of our original but lapsed nature, the punishment of our sin, *For in the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, Gen. ii. 17. This is the universal law now become a sentence upon all mankind, and there is no escaping it.

But dying is not all, nor the chief; the soul survives the body, and at its separation from it, must immediately go either to Heaven or Hell.

2. The

2. The assigning of other places than one of these to souls departed, is gross fiction, usually accompanied with an aim to deceive and cheat men, in order to the serving of some particular present worldly design of temporal profit and advantage to the contrivers of such fables, who enrich themselves by the ignorant stupidity and damnation of their credulous followers.

3. The *Papists* have found out three places (which the Scriptures know nor speak nothing of) wherein they pretend departed souls do abide after their removal from the body.

1. A place called *Limbus Patrum*, where they say the souls of the faithful abide 'till the ascension of Christ.

That this was an ancient and current opinion in the early ages of the Christian Church, we deny not; the hymn called *St. Ambrose's*, seems to refer to it in these words, *When thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, thou didst open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers.*

But we have no authority for such an opinion in the Holy Scriptures, which are the sole rule and warrant of our faith, nor do they, that I can find, give the least countenance to it.

Enoch and *Elias* were translated into Heaven in body and soul, and it is hard to think that *Abraham*, *Moses*, *Samuel*, *Daniel*, &c. (whose

(whose God *Jehovah* was, no less than their's) should as to their spirits be in a worse condition than they.

Some say this is implied in the article of our creed, *he descended into Hell*; so he went into *Limbus* to release the souls of the faithful Patriarchs thence: but the Scripture is silent as to any such sense of that article, and our Saviour's answer to the thief upon the cross, *this day shalt thou be with me in paradise*, seems plainly to contradict it.

2. They tell us of another place, where the souls of unbaptized children are lodged, that is neither Heaven nor Hell.

But it is more agreeable to Scripture, and the tenor of the covenant of grace, to suppose that the children of believers, though dying without baptism, are saved, and do go immediately into Heaven, for the promise is to them and to their children, *Acts* ii. 39.

3. But the third place which they make the greatest noise about (for a very obvious reason, because they get most by it) is Purgatory; where they tell us the souls of believers, who were not thoroughly purg'd at their death, nor have made satisfaction for their venial sins, do endure terrible punishments and torments, and that by fire; which they most of them agree to be material, and there they must abide 'till they have paid the utmost farthing; and then when they have paid

paid all, they are freely forgiven and taken up into Heaven.

Thus they blasphemously liken the blessed God to a hard, wicked, unjust man, who pretends to forgive his debtor, but holds him still prisoner, and will not set him at liberty till the debt be fully paid, which is to add mockery to cruelty.

4. The difference they assign between these three places, is as follows.

1. They say with respect to its situation (tho' they know not where to fix it) it is the lowest place near to Hell.

Somewhere near the center of the earth, a horrid dark noisom sultry dungeon or prison.

Next to that they tell you is the prison of infants, where they are held in a dozing condition, and in a state of insensibility.

And the place, the apartment of the Fathers who died before Christ's coming in the uppermost region nearest day, and whence they might with the greater ease be removed, or translated, when the time for it should come.

2. The Papists tell us, that Purgatory is a place wherein the souls of men (even of righteous men) undergo sore and grievous torments, not differing for kind and degree even from those of Hell it self, but only in duration.

Which

Which if it had any truth in it, were enough to fright even good men out of their wits. Who (without an extraordinary divine assistance) can endure but to hold his finger for one minute of an hour in the flame of a candle, much more to give his body to be burn'd, or be thrown, as the three children in *Daniel* were, into a fiery furnace heated seven times hotter than usual? But what is all that to Purgatory, according to the representation the *Romish* Priests make of it? It is no commendation of their Religion, that it can take no hold of men but by their ignorant slavish fear, and other guilty passions.

As to their other two prisons, indeed, they say, that nothing is there endured, their punishment is only of loss, they have no sense of pain and misery.

3. They tell us, that these prisons differ from one another in duration, the *Limbus* of the fathers was emptied at Christ's descent into Hell, or at most a little after, when he ascended up into Heaven; so that now there is a void in the divine creation, an empty space good for nothing, and that no use is made of; for I could never learn that any of them assert its annihilation.

Nor do they give us any intimation that the souls of infants, dying before the reception of the initial sacrament, are ever released;

leased ; so that their punishment of loss seems, according to them, to be of equal duration with that of the punishment of loss and sense, which the damned in Hell must undergo for ever.

As for Purgatory, that prison holds all that come into it till the day of Judgment, unless (which poor folks have no ground to hope for) they are released by masses, indulgences, and the prayers of their Priests, which who would not give all he has in the world for, if he thought they would do the feat?

Can it then be, that all these should be any other than riddles, dreams, and fictions? Can a man of common sense read his Bible with any attention or seriousness, and give in to them?

They themselves are well aware that it is not, cannot be, and therefore they rob Christians of their Bibles, that they may the more effectually delude them, and make them capable of swallowing old wives fables as divine oracles.

5. The arguments against Purgatory are irrefragable: I will briefly touch upon a few of the plainest, which are an overmatch for the sophistry of a *Bellarmino*, a *Cassander*, a *Perron*, or any of their ablest advocates.

1. If every man at his death is either in a pardon'd, or an unpardon'd state, there can be no Purgatory: But

But every man when he dies is either pardon'd, or unpardon'd:

Therefore there can be no such place as Purgatory for the expiation of sins after death.

This proof is so plain and conclusive, that nothing needs be added to confirm or illustrate it.

For if there be no middle state in this life, there can be none in that to come; God's pardons are compleat: Christ's satisfaction (on which they are grounded, and in virtue of which they are given forth) was every way full and sufficient.

God will no more remember the sins of those he has once forgiven; and the blood of Jesus Christ our Lord cleanseth us from all sin, what need or use then, or even room for penal satisfactions in Purgatory can there be?

Can a malefactor be pardon'd and yet executed? Can a man be absolv'd, and yet made to endure pains equivalent to those in Hell it self, and that differ from them in nothing but duration?

Justification by the free grace of God in Jesus Christ, on account of his meritorious sacrifice and satisfaction, and the suffering of satisfactory penalties in Purgatory, are as opposite as the two poles, if the one be true, the other is most certainly false.

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2. The pains of loss and of sense cannot be separated in the other world, nor does the scripture make the least mention of any temporary punishments after death, but confines all the sufferings of good men to the present life, and threatens eternal punishment to all the wicked and finally impenitent.

And if this be so, there can certainly be neither Limbus nor Purgatory.

The loss of Heaven, and the sight of God would most certainly have been a terrible punishment to the faithful before Christ's coming in the flesh, and have been accompanied with unspeakable anguish and horror; the same may be said of the souls of infants in a separate state, unless we will suppose them (which there can be no pretence for) of a different make and species from those of the adult.

And for Purgatory, the Scripture never mentions any sufferings for the faithful but during the present life, all beyond is represented as *fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.*

3. If Christ has fully satisfied for our sins there can be no Purgatory; for the end of supposing one is in vain, it is to do that over again which Christ has sufficiently done already. Christ has satisfied not only for our greater but for our lesser sins too; the least sin could not be pardon'd but on account of

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his satisfaction, and on that account the greatest may be so too: the doctrine of Purgatory makes a wretched sinner a sharer with Christ in the merit and honour of satisfaction; than which nothing can be more absurd and blasphemous.

Christ said on the Cross, *it is finished*, John xix. 30. No say the Papists it is not, nor will be till the end of the world.

God will not require the payment of the same debt twice from Christ, and from us too; nor will so merciful a father inflict so terrible punishments, as those of Purgatory are, on his beloved and obedient children for trifles, for piccadillos, as the Papists count those to be which they call venial sins.

4. It is not conceivable that a man can be united to Christ, and yet undergo such terrible and intollerable pains as the Papists tell us those of Purgatory are; and *that* for so long a time, as according to their doctrine, they most of them do.

The children of God do indeed endure many and sore afflictions in this life; but they are none of them so extream as the Papists teach their disciples that the pains of Purgatory are.

Nor are they satisfactory.

And they are so far from intolerable, that the Apostle speaks of them as light and but for a moment; and by the grace of God,
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and the prospect of future glory, easy to be endur'd, *Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17.*

There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, Rom. viii. 1.

They that believe in Christ do not come into condemnation, *John iii. 18.*

Surely then they shall not lie Hundreds, it may be Thousands, of years in Purgatory.

6. The pleas which the Papists advance for their doctrine of Purgatory are silly and trifling, as will be evident from a short view of a few of them.

1. Their principal argument is from *1 Cor. iii. 12, 13, 14, 15.* We have *there* indeed the word *fire*, but not a syllable of Purgatory; and the fire there mention'd is to try mens doctrines, not to purge their persons; and after all, the last expression which they urge with so much importunity, is nothing more than a common metaphorical and proverbial speech, to note the great difficulty with which the teachers of false doctrines, tho' mix'd with weighty and important truths, can be saved, if at all they can, it is but so as by fire, as a man escapes naked for his life from a house in flames.

2. They would press that text also into this service, *1 Pet. iii. 19. By which he went also and preached unto the spirits in prison.*

But this text makes no more to the purpose than the former, for the prison the Apostle speaks of is not Purgatory, but Hell.

Christ preached by his spirit in and with the ministry of *Noah* to the old world, who for their disobedience were in Hell, in the time when the Apostle *Peter* wrote, and must continue there for ever.

An awful warning to us to look to our selves, that we fall not into a worse prison than the Papists teach Purgatory to be, and from which there is no redemption, or escape; once in Hell, and there for ever.

3. But they say when our Saviour tells us, *Matt. xii. 32.* that the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost should not be forgiven, *neither in this world, neither in the world to come.* It implies, say they, that some sins shall be forgiven in the World to come. *viz.* those for which men have satisfied.

But this is around about, and indeed an absurd way of arguing; for our Saviour, elsewhere explains himself, *viz.* in the foregoing *verse*, and in *Mark iii. 29.* This sin shall not be forgiven, have never forgiveness, it shall not be remitted in Purgatory, or after we have been a long time there, but it shall be punish'd for ever, and that in Hell.

4. They are so weak as to argue for Purgatory from *Matt. v. 25.* but to read the text,

text, is a sufficient confutation of so absurd a plea.

The adversary there spoken of is probably an offended injured brother, and so it is but like *Solomon's* advice to avoid suretyship, or to end our matters with the utmost care and speed, least worse come of it.

Or if it refer (at least by accomodation) to our spiritual interests, it can have no reference to Purgatory, because no impenitent sinners go thither; but only the imperfectly righteous, *the wicked are all turned into Hell.*

Besides their opinion leans on a rotten foundation, *viz.* That we can satisfy for our sins and pay the uttermost farthing, which if God be true, is utterly impossible.

Little reason therefore had *Bellarmino* to say, that whosoever believeth not Purgatory, shall be tormented in Hell; let us rather flee from the wrath to come.

Avoid Hell and we need not fear the painted flames of Purgatory.

Use 1. Learn hence that our souls are immortal, for unless they were so, they could not go at death to Heaven or Hell.

2. That souls departed do not sleep till the resurrection, some have held this dreaming opinion, but reason and Scripture fully confute it; had this been true, *Paul* would never have desired to be dissolved, *and to be with Christ, which is far better*, Phil. i. 23.

3. Prayers for the dead are vain and fruitless, it's a meer idle superstition; holy men need them not, and wicked men cannot be profitted by them.

The opinion is built upon that of Purgatory, and must fall with it.

4. To them, to whom to live is Christ, to die shall be gain; death is to be desired rather than feared by a believer; a good man should only need leave to die, we must not break prison, but we should be glad of a fair release from our prison, a free discharge from our warfare.

5. Wicked men have cause to fear death, while they go on impenitently in their sins, for to them it will be a sure introduction to misery.

6. All should take care in time to work out their salvation with fear and trembling: now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation, &c.





DISCOURSE XII.

No Sins Venial.

ROM. vi. 23.

The wages of sin is death.



THAT sin is the greatest of all evils, is in it self most certainly true, and as to us would be universally acknowledged, were it not that the habits of sin put out the eyes of mens understandings, and so blind them that they cannot distinguish aright between good and evil, neither as to the nature, nor as to the degree of each.

This is one great end of the divine revelation granted to sinful mortals.

To rectify our notions of those important matters, and to set the nature and degrees of good and evil in a true light.

The words I have read to you shew us, That sin is the greatest evil, because the greatest punishment is assigned to it as its just desert.

There is not any sin so small as not to deserve death, which is the greatest of punishments. This is our proper merit as we are sinners; it is as due to us as pay is to a soldier who has ventur'd his life for it, or as the penny agreed for, is to the hired labourer who has toiled for it all day.

The death here spoken of is temporal and eternal, the fruit and off-spring of spiritual death; by sin we slew our selves and became spiritually dead, and God as a just ruler, a righteous judge, first threatens, and then inflicts temporal death on all, and eternal death on the finally impenitent for it.

Doctrine, That death is due to sin as sin, and therefore to every sin.

Or thus, there is not any sin great or small, which does not deserve death as its proper wages.

And this is directly contrary to what the Papists generally teach, and the Council of *Trent* hath establish'd, when they distinguish sins into venial and mortal.

For setting this matter in a true light, let me hint to you the following particulars.

I. Sin is the transgression of the law of God, 1 *John* iii. 4. any sin, every sin is so, whe-

whether it be a sin of omission, or commission, secret, or open, in thought, word, or deed, its nature and malignity lies in this, that it's a violation of God's holy, just, and good law, *For where no law is, there is no transgression*, Rom. iv. 15 And where any law is transgressed, there is sin, and the conscience is under guilt, and the soul that sinneth is under strict obligation to punishment, which none but God himself can release him from.

The soul that sinneth, it shall die, Ezekiel xviii. 20.

Hence our sins are called our debts, *Matt. vi. 12.* and the divine justice has a right to exact punishment of us 'till satisfaction be made, *i. e.* either till we have paid the uttermost farthing, or another hath fully satisfied for us, and laid down the whole price of our redemption.

2. The law threatneth death to every transgression, *Gen. ii. 17. For in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, Deut. xxvii. 26. *Cursed be he that continueth not in all the words of this law to do them.*

The law makes no distinction in this regard between greater and lesser sins, but dooms the transgressors to death, of what kind or degree soever the transgression be.

3. Some of the Papists themselves have shown no good liking to this distinction of sins into mortal and venial, but contrariwise have

have appeared dissatisfied with it, *Gerson*, our *Fisber* Bishop of *Rockester*, &c.

And indeed the very light of nature, as well as Scripture is so much against it, that one would wonder that any who attend to either, should ever imbibe so groundless and absurd an opinion.

4. Yet the Council of *Trent* hath expressly taught thus, and enjoined all those of her communion to believe as they do herein, or else they have agreed to cast them out of the Church, and then leave them in the hands of the secular power to chastise, *i. e.* to crush and ruin them. See the fifth chapter of the fourth session of that Council.

And their great champion, *Bellarmino*, is zealous for it, and has bestowed much pains to defend it, as well as he can.

5. By mortal sins, they say they mean such sins as wholly turn away the soul from the love of God, and extinguish the habits of grace, or prevent our attaining them.

They liken them to deadly wounds, which after they are inflicted, he who has received them cannot long survive, but must speedily, if not immediately, die of them.

On the contrary, venial sins, they say, are such sins as though they abate the love of God in the soul, and hinder the exercise of it, yet they do not wholly extinguish it; and these, they say, do not deserve death, but men
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may satisfy for them themselves by penances, pilgrimages, alms, &c. or after death they may be released from the guilt and punishment of them by masses, prayers, or however (though) that may be a long while a doing, by the pains and torments of Purgatory.

These they say do not deserve eternal death, but only temporal punishment, which is to be endured in this life or in that to come, on earth, or in the fires of Purgatory.

6. They teach that sins are venial, either, first in kind, or secondly in degree. First, In kind, when the nature of the sin is such, that it is not great enough to deprive us of the love of God, or throw us out of his favour, nor does it according to them, deserve eternal death; it is besides, says *Bellarmino*, not against the divine precept.

There is some disorder and irregularity in it, but not so great as that God should wholly abandon, or everlastingly punish us for it; nay, some of them venture to say, God would not be just, but rather cruel and unmerciful, if he should deal with sinners at such a rate of severity.

Of this sort they reckon idle words the foolish jesting, which the Apostle reproves, *Eph. v. 4.* excessive laughter, an officious lye, and the like.

2. A sin they reckon may be venial in respect of the degree of it, either in that it is committed indeliberately and by sudden surprise, without the full consent of the will, as in the sudden motions of lust, anger, revenge, and such like; or because the matter of it is so small and inconsiderable, as to be unworthy of either divine or humane animadversion; as when a man steals a halfpenny, an egg, an apple, or some such inconsiderable trifle, they think it hard to say, that such an action deserves eternal death, though it may be a manifest violation of the divine law.

They think so small an invasion of anothers right, which does our neighbour very little damage, and would rarely, if at all break human friendship, cannot expose a man to the everlasting punishments, which are threatned in and by the law of God.

7. The question between us and the Papists is not whether all sins be equal or not (which we grant they are not, though they falsely charge us with that absurd paradox of the *Stoicks*) but whether every sin in its intrinsic nature, and if God should deal in strictness with us, does deserve eternal death.

And this we hold, and are taught so to do, both by Scripture and the dictates of impartial and unprejudiced reason, as we shall presently prove to you.

8. Nei-

8. Neither do we deny, but in regard to the event and final issue, some sins may be called venial, and others mortal, or rather mortaliferous.

Every sin deserves death, but every sin shall not in the event prove deadly to every sinner, for then no flesh could be saved.

All manner of sin shall be forgiven to penitent believers, but no sin, not the least, shall be forgiven to the finally unbelieving and impenitent.

But that any sin should be in it self venial (not need, nay even deserve pardon) is a flat contradiction to divine testimony, and the natural sense of an enlightned mind.

A man must have little or no sense of God, of sin, or duty, of an immortal soul, of Heaven or Hell, that can believe the Popish doctrine of venial sin.

9. Neither do we deny that there is a great difference as to the degree of guilt and heinousness in the sins of believers themselves, though all their sins shall eventually be pardoned.

Some sins incapacitate even a believer himself from actual entrance into the kingdom of Heaven, 'till he is renewed again by an actual and explicit repentance; such was *David's* murder and adultery, *Lot's* incest, *Peter's* denial of his Lord and Master, &c.

Others

Others are infirmities, that have a pardon of course upon a sincere, though general repentance, if we do not allow and indulge ourselves, or grow secure in them; such are many vain words, sudden passions, distractions in holy duties, defects in the habits, and exercise of particular graces, faith, hope, love, patience, meekness, &c. which none are wholly free from in this life.

Paul was in a safe and happy state, not only habitually but actually, even then when he cried out so bitterly, *Rom. vii. 24. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*

Now to prove that no sins are (in the Popish sense) venial, viz. not in their own nature, and in strict justice I shall lay before you the following arguments.

1. As we have before shewed, every sin is threatned by God with death, and therefore does certainly deserve it, for there is, nor can be, no unrighteousness with God, *Rom. ix. 14. The judge of all the earth will do right*, *Gen. xviii. 25.* And the perfection of his nature will not permit him to threaten any thing, which he may not most righteously inflict, so you have it expressly in my text, and in *Ezek. xviii. 20.* and many other places.

The sentence is general and indefinite.

Those

Those the Papists call venial sins, either are sins, or they are not ; if they are not sins, Why do they themselves call them so? If they are, the word of God is plain and expresse against them that they deserve death, and then surely they are mortal and not venial (in their sense) even the least, as well as the greatest.

And the Apostle useth this argument in that very view, to dehorte the *Romans* from all sin, not only from great and enormous crimes ; but even from those trespasses which are accounted least, and which natural conscience does not so easily, or with so much noise and clamour, charge men with, or accuse and condemn them for.

2. If every sin exposeth men to the wrath and curse of God, then no sin is, or can be, of its own nature venial : but this the Apostle (from the forecited place in *Deuteronomy*) is most plain and expresse in *Gal. iii. 10.* *For as many as are of the works of the law,* (that is under the law as a covenant of works) *are under the curse :* (for that cannot be removed, but by the grace of the Gospel or new covenant) *for it is written, cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.*

Sins of omission (especially some sorts of them) are counted (by many at least) for some of the smallest sins, and yet for those,
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the Apostle assures us we are liable to the curse of the law, and our Saviour represents the sentence of the great day, as passing upon the finally impertinent chiefly for them, *Matt. xxv. ad fin.*

And *Simon Magus* is exhorted by *Peter* to pray to God, if perhaps the thought of his heart may be forgiven him, *Acts viii. 22.*

They know neither God, his law, nor themselves, who think any sin so little as not to need forgiveness; and if the least sin remain unpardoned, it will unavoidably sink the soul into the bottomless pit.

3. I argue against the Romish doctrine of venial sins from *James ii. 10. Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* So that even the least sin is in some sense a violation of the whole law of God, and therefore sure cannot be of its own nature venial.

By every sin, the authority of God, as Legislator, is violated, a door is opened to repeated and aggravated transgressions; he that wilfully breaks the least Commandment, knows not where he shall stop, for he has cast off the fear of God, which is the principal restraint from sin, and he thwarts the end of the law, which is charity or the love of God; so that in one sin we frustrate as much as in us lies the great end of all divine precepts, and dash the
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tables of God's holy law in pieces to make bold with any sin, is the way to run loose into all, and therefore can be no light or venial matter.

4. Our blessed Lord himself hath told us, *Matt. xii. 36, 37. That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words (saith he) thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.*

What is commonly thought more venial than an idle word? And yet for that we stand accountable in the divine judgment, and are liable to condemnation for it.

Or if by any idle word we understand (as some good expositors do) a false word, a lye; yet how little account do some make even of that, especially if it be, as men have learn'd to distinguish, a merry, or an officious one? they think it is no great matter, it does nobody any harm, and sometimes does (as they reckon) a great deal of good; but for all that it is a breach of God's holy law, and renders us liable to eternal death.

But though men can at present interpret away the sense and force of the divine precepts, they will not then find it easy to ward off the blow of his righteous terrible judgments.

Popery is calculated to make sin sit light and easy upon men's consciences; but they will have other thoughts of it, when they shall hear Christ saying to them, for those very sins which they were taught to call and count venial, *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels*, Matt. xxv. 41.

5. Because every sin is contrary to the divine glory, injurious to the Majesty of God, and so contracts a guilt that may well be called infinite, in respect of the object against whom it is committed, and whose very being, as well as glory, it strikes at; every wilful sin, even the least being pregnant with Atheism, which it carries in the very heart and bowels of it; as also in respect of its duration, since being once admitted, the stain of it must endure for ever, if divine grace and mercy do not interpose.

For the sinner can never remove it of himself, so that the least sin does in its own nature directly tend to shut us out of Heaven (for nothing that defiles, or is defiled, shall enter therein, *Rev. xxi. 27.*) and shut us up in Hell. And call you this a *Peccadillo*, a trifle, a venial business, that deprives us of infinite good, and exposeth us to the utmost everlasting misery and torments?

6. No sin can be venial, because to whomsoever sin is remitted, it is so of grace, not of

of debt; and therefore God could not be charged with any unrighteousness if he did not remit it.

The Popish doctrine in this matter lessens, and even extinguisheth, the free grace and mercy of God, in pardoning the sins of his people, and so overturns the whole plan of the Gospel.

By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of your selves: it is the gift of God, Eph. ii. 8. The Papists will not be so saved; it concerns them therefore to look to it in time, how they can escape the damnation of Hell.

And let Protestants keep themselves from the tents and tenets of such wicked men, whose principles are as bad as their lives, for if grace do not save us, we must unavoidably perish for ever.

7. If Christ died for the least as well as the greatest sins, then all, and every sin, must be in its own nature mortal, and must render us liable to eternal death.

Now we know, that without the shedding of his blood, there is no remission; it is he that by his death saves his people from their sins, and delivers them from the wrath to come; and the blood of Jesus Christ is that alone which cleanseth us from all sin, of whatever sort or size it be, *Heb. ix. 22. Matt. i. 21. 1 Thess. i. 10. 1 John i. 7.*

3d But to all this the Papists object.

bib 1. From *James i. 15.* where the Apostle saith, *Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin when it is finished, bringeth forth death.* Whence they argue, that sin is not mortal 'till it is finished, *i. e.* 'till the inward lustings of the heart are compleated by the outward act: but this cannot be the Apostles meaning, unless we suppose him to contradict himself and our blessed Lord and Master, who assures us, *Matt. v. 28. That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.* Besides, the Apostle is here speaking of what gives the finishing stroke to lust and temptation, *viz.* the outward act; but he does not at all intimate that the preparations thereunto do not render us guilty in the sight of God, and lay us open to his just wrath and vengeance.

2. Some of the Popish doctors understand that of the Apostle, *1 Cor. iii. 15.* where he speaks of building hay and stubble upon the foundation of venial sins, which, say they, they who are guilty of shall be saved, though it be as by fire.

3d But 'tis plain they grossly wrest the text; for the Apostle is not there speaking of venial sins, but of new, vain, and curious doctrines, whereby men corrupted the sacred truth, and that many times in very important, though
not

not absolutely fundamental or essential points; therefore this is a meer cavil: besides, that if such erroneous teachers be saved, it is by the free grace of God, pardoning their errors; not that they were in their own nature venial, or that they were to be purged from them by the imaginary fire of Purgatory, of which the Scriptures (as some of themselves confess) have not one word or syllable.

3. They triumph in that text, *1 John v. 16, 17.* There is a sin unto death, and a sin not unto death: But they triumph before the victory and boast without cause; for the Apostle is with great probability thought to speak there of such sins of professed Christians, as brought them under the sentence of excommunication, which frequently was attended with death, threatening distempers, and often did actually cost men their lives, though God might be merciful to their souls, and therefore he adviseth such to confess their sins to the elders of the Church, that they might be pardoned and spared. But in case it were evident that God would not spare the person's life, and that he should die as a warning to others (of which in those times apostolical men could make a judgment, though it be not so with us now) in such a case they were not to pray in that manner for him, see *1 Cor. v. 5.* and Chapter xi. 29, 30, 31, 32. But if we understand the Apostle here

of the sin against the Holy Ghost, compared with other sins, those other sins are not to be reckoned venial in the Popish sense; but only eventually through the free grace and mercy of God.

[I thought to have mentioned and answered several other of their objections, but I would add a hint or two by way of application, and therefore must wave it.]

1. Hence let us learn to hate and flee from all sin, lesser as well as greater.

2. Ascribe righteousness to God, when he visits our iniquities upon us.

3. Adore the riches of divine grace, in the pardon and forgiveness of our sins.

4. Let Christ be precious to us; meditate much on him and his love.

5. Study the covenant of grace, and prize and improve the seals of it.



DISCOURSE XIII.

Against the merit of good Works.

ROM. vi. 23.

The gift of God is eternal life.

 IN, even the least sin, we have shewed you from the foregoing words, deserves death, therefore no sin is, or can be in its own nature, venial.

We are now to shew you from this latter part of the verse, the absurdity of the Romish doctrine concerning human merits: our evil doings do properly deserve Hell, but our best actions cannot deserve Heaven.

Doctrine. That since eternal life is the free gift of God, it cannot be the purchase of man's merit.

No man can deserve any thing at the hand of God. In opening, and confirming this
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point : I shall suggest to you, and beg your heedful attention to the following particulars.

1. The word *merit* is commonly understood, either in a strict and proper sense, or in a large and improper one.

In a strict and proper sense it notes, that a reward is due to an action in strict justice, on account of the worth or value of what is done in order to obtain it.

In a larger sense, it is often put to denote any thing whereby good is obtained, or that is the way and means thereunto.

And in this latter sense, the fathers made no scruple of using the word *merit*, and are always to be understood to mean nothing more by it : and therefore the Popish writers of controversy abuse their readers, when from their use of the word, they would persuade them that the fathers are wholly on their side in the point of merit.

Thus *Austin* saith, that *Paul* merited forgiveness.

And *Ambrose*, speaking of baptism, saith, that water deserved to be a sacrament of Christ, or of the new covenant.

Whence *Cassander*, a moderate Papist observes, that the words *merit* and *desert*, or *meriting* and *deserving*, when we meet with them in the ancient ecclesiastic writers, are to be taken to signify no more than obtaining,

or

or being an apt, and fit, and appointed means to obtain any benefit: So *Cyprian* renders that, 1 *Tim.* i. 13. I obtained mercy (very harshly indeed, but with a very honest meaning) I deserved mercy.

But the later Papists (and especially since the Council of *Trent*) urge the strict and proper sense of the word, and will (against the plainest evidence to the contrary) have the fathers understood according to their meanings, and as patrons of their novel and absurd doctrine; that good works are strictly and properly meritorious of eternal life, and that not only of compact and in vertue of God's gracious Covenant, but on account of the intrinsick value and dignity of the work it self.

2. The Papists hold that to be a meritorious action to which a reward is justly due, and such they esteem all the good works of saints to be.

And they commonly distinguish merit (in their barbarous scholastic language) into merit of congruity, and merit of condignity.

Merit of congruity, they say, belongs to actions virtually good, perform'd by the power of free-will, not assisted by spiritual grace.

And by such actions as these men may (according to them) fit and dispose themselves

selves for God's grace; and if they thus do what in them lies, God is bound (they tell us) to give to such persons his special saving grace.

Merit of condignity, they tell us, belongs to such good works as are done indeed by the power of free-will, but assisted by the special grace and operation of the holy spirit of God; and these, they teach, are altogether worthy of a reward, and that no less than eternal life, not only on account of the promise and covenant of God, but of their own nature and in respect of the intrinsic value and goodness of the work, and the equality and proportion there is between the work and the reward.

3. Yet some of the Papists themselves do think, and speak more soundly in this great point than others do, such especially as wrote before the Council of *Trent*.

The merit of Congruity, many of them will not allow to be any merit at all, though others of them do vehemently assert the contrary.

The former mean by merit (as they explain themselves) only such actions as are good, commendable, and praise-worthy; such as these we rather blame for speaking improperly, or indeed dangerously, than for any unsoundness of faith in this matter; though it would become them not to lay
stum-

stumbling-blocks in the way of the weak, nor give any handle to calumniate them, or think and speak more hardly of them than they really deserve.

As for the latter sort, who assert a proper merit of congruity, they are enemies to the free grace of God, and asserters of the rankest Pelagianism, in which, I wish, they had not too many followers among some who call themselves Protestants.

IV. That a work may be meritorious, there must be found in it these five conditions or qualifications.

1. It must be a work that was not previously due; for no man merits a reward by paying a just debt.

2. It must be our own, done by our selves, in our own proper persons, not by proxy; and that by our own inherent power and strength, and not by the help, assistance, and influence of another.

3. It must be entire and perfect, without any the least defect, spot, or blemish; otherwise it is faulty and deserves punishment, and needs forgiveness; and what does so can never deserve a reward, and it would be the grossest contradiction to say it did.

4. It must be equal and proportionate in worth and value to the reward; otherwise what is bestowed will be (at least in part) a gift, and there will be no proper merit in the case.

5. It

5. It must be such a work as to which the reward is strictly and properly due; so that it would be injustice to withhold it, or to abate anything of it.

V. It will hence evidently follow, that there can be no proper merit of good works, either of congruity or condignity; for as much as all the foregoing characters are wanting to our very best works, not only while we continue in our natural state and condition (in which we cannot do one action truly and spiritually good) but even after we are renewed by grace; much weakness and defilement attending our best services, even when we are passed from death to life, and our persons and performances are accepted of by God through Jesus Christ.

VI. The Protestants do not deny but that good works (truly so called) are exceeding grateful and well-pleasing to God through Jesus Christ, and shall obtain at his hands a full reward, though still of grace, not of debt, *Matt. xxv. 34, 35, 36, 37. Heb. xiii. 16. To do good, and to communicate, forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

VII. We also grant, that it is lawful to do good works out of a respect to the recompence of reward; thus *Moses* did, *Heb. xi. 26.* and our blessed Lord himself, *Heb. xii. 2.* The promise of Heaven is one of the grand motives

motives Scripture makes use of to engage us to purity of heart, diligence in duty, universality and constancy in our obedience, and patience in suffering: and what God has propounded to us as a motive, we certainly may, and ought to make use of as such.

As this is not meritorious, so neither is it mercenary, provided we watch against all vain confidence and boasting, and cherish the pure flames of divine love in our souls, and do not ultimately center in our selves, but make the glory of God our highest end in all we do.

VIII. Nor do we deny the connexion which God has fixed between good works springing from faith as the way and means, and Heaven and Happiness as the end to be sought and obtain'd by us.

We say with the Apostle, *Heb. xii. 14.* that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, and with it no man shall finally miscarry.

Holiness and obedience are as the seed, and the future glory as the harvest.

But these are no proper cause of our happiness, though they are the necessary way and means to it.

God who has promis'd Heaven to persevering faith and obedience, will be faithful to his word, and accomplish his promise; but there is nothing in our best works to make it a debt of justice to us. And

And therefore we do from our hearts abhor the proud, vain-glorious, absurd, and heretical doctrine of *Vasquez*, *Bellarmino*, and other learned Doctors of the Church of *Rome*, who are not ashamed to assert, That the works of just men entitle them first and chiefly to eternal life by their intrinsic dignity and value, before any consideration is had of the grace, covenant, or promise of God; and again, that there is no addition of worthiness to the works of righteous men from the person and merits of Christ: nay, *Bellarmino* tells us, that God is a debtor to man, not only by his own promise, but on the account of our proper works: an assertion that one would have thought should have fill'd the Cardinal's face with a blush, deeper tinctur'd than his own purple.

That this doctrine is not only unscriptural, but against Scripture, reason, conscience, and truth, I shall endeavour to make plain by the following considerations or arguments.

1. The Scripture calls eternal life the free gift of God, as here in my text: now a free gift and a just debt are as contrary as any two things in nature whatsoever are; the one cannot be the other. What meant the Apostle to change his language, saying, *the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life*, if the one were as due a debt as the other? So that we see these pretended

ded followers of the Apostle *Peter* make no scruple of contradicting the Apostle *Paul*; and indeed he was too vehement an asserter of the free grace of God for them to pay any great deference to his judgment, even after they have in words acknowledg'd his inspiration; let him say what he will, they will depend upon, and follow the decrees of their *Trent* Conventicle, as more infallible than even an inspir'd Apostle.

Psal ciii. 4. Bless the Lord, O my soul, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies. *Ephes.* ii. 8. By grace ye are saved through faith; and that not of your selves: it is the gift of God. *Titus* iii. 5. Not by works of righteousness, but of his mercy he hath saved us.

If our salvation be of mercy, it cannot be by our own merits.

2. We are saved by Christ's merits, and therefore not by our own, *Acts* xx. 28. We are purchased with his blood, *Heb.* ix. 12. By his own blood he obtained eternal redemption for us. *Acts* iv. 12. There is no other name by which we must be saved, but his only.

Is it not then detestable arrogance for any of us to set up to be our own saviours, to rely on our own good works (falsely call'd merits) instead of that precious blood of his, which could only purchase pardon and right to Heaven for us?

By

By this method we shut our selves out of Heaven, and cancel all our hopes of admission into it, for we cannot be heirs and purchasers both : none go to Heaven but those who are made heirs of it; therefore not any who pretend to buy it for themselves by their good deeds.

3. A servant cannot merit of his master, much less can an unprofitable servant do it; all we can do for God, we are strictly bound to do, for we derive our beings from his bounty; have received all our talents, and even the ability to use and improve them from him, and therefore certainly cannot merit any thing at his hands: this argument our blessed Lord hath set in its full light and force, *Luke xvii. 7, 8, 9, 10.*

No man does all those things that are required of him, for in many things we offend all, *James iii. 2.* but if we could, we should merit nothing by so doing.

We are unprofitable servants, is not an expression of meer humility, a kind of spiritual compliment, but a strict and sad truth; and it becomes us to be deeply sensible of it, and affected with it, and practically to apply it to our selves.

The servant here spoken of is not an hired servant, who might earn his wages by his labour, and so, in some sense, be said to merit of his master; but (such as servants commonly

monly servants were in those times) a slave bought with his master's money, or born in his house, whose person was his master's property, and therefore wholly to be employed by and for him, and who accordingly could do nothing that was not his strict duty, much less could he go beyond it, as he must do, before he could in reason advance a pretence to, or a plea of merit.

They were truly good persons Christ here speaks to, *viz.* his own Apostles; and yet he tells even them they were unprofitable servants, *i. e.* defective, and such as came short of the utmost perfection, and therefore have more need to sue for pardon, than boast of, or be confident of their merits.

We cannot be profitable to God; he needs us not: our goodness extends not to him, *Psalms* l. 12. *Psalms* xvi. 2. Nay, we cannot be profitable to our selves, but by his grace; How then can we merit any thing at his hand?

When God sets the crown of Glory upon the heads of any of his Saints, he crowns his own gifts, not their merits.

4. Sufferings and Martyrdom willingly undergone from a right principle, and for the sake of Christ, are the the chief of all our good works here in this life.

We can do no better thing than willingly to suffer, and lay down our lives for his sake ; but these do not merit eternal life ; therefore no other good works (which are all inferior to this) can do it.

Our lives are not of equal value to the heavenly glory, our sufferings are not comparable to it, *Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17.* Now where there is no proportion between the work and the reward, there can be no merit, it must be wholly of grace.

5. Eternal life is an inheritance, and therefore not a purchase of our own making : for the notion of these two are inconsistent. We obtain it by a free adoption, not by giving an equivalent for it ; we are children, and therefore heirs, *heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ, Rom. viii. 17.*

Our good works are not the cause of our obtaining the heavenly inheritance, but only the appointed way to it.

It is for Christ's sake that we are adopted ; and it is for his merits, not our own, that we are admitted to sit down together with him in the heavenly places, *Ephes. ii. 6.*

Having thus briefly and plainly asserted the Protestant doctrine, in opposition to that of the Romanists, concerning the merit of good works, I shall make a few remarks on what they plead in behalf of their desperate cause ; desperate indeed, where scripture and
reason

reason may be heard; but not where meer humane authority and violence carry all.

There is no cause so bad, but men of learning and parts will find something to say for it, if it be the way to preferment, or their assertions can be back'd by force and cruelty.

1. They say that Scripture is called in Heaven, a reward.

Ans. True: but the same Scripture distinguisheth between a reward of debt, and a reward of grace, *Rom. iv. 4.* in the latter sense Heaven is a reward, but not in the former. It is call'd a reward (as one well observes) to stir up the diligence of believers, not to gratify their pride, or nourish their self-confidence.

2. They argue from *2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.* *I fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge shall give me at that day.* God gives Paul the crown of righteousness as a righteous judge, therefore it was due, and Paul had merited it.

To which I answer, That the word righteousness in Scripture (when spoken of God in relation to man) does often signify his benignity, kindness, grace and mercy.

Or it may signify the faithfulness of God, in making good his word or promise.

Sure we are, the Apostle *Paul* never dreamt of meriting the crown of righteousness; he that calls himself the chiefest of sinners, the least of all saints, not worthy to be called an Apostle; he who in all his Epistles sets forth the impotency and misery of fallen man, and the exceeding riches of divine grace, in the liveliest colours, and strongest expressions, and with the utmost pathos and vehemency of affection! If they have no better patrons of their doctrine than the Apostle *Paul*, it must e'en shift for it self as well as it can, for there is much against it, but not a tittle for it in all his writings.

3. They plead, that in *Rev. xxii. 12. Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be.*

Hence they argue, that every man's reward shall be according to his work, which we deny not; but it does not hence follow that there is a proportion of equality between the work and the reward, and so a proper merit; but only, that such as mens works are in this life, such shall be their state in the next, *Rom. ii. 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.*

4. They pretend that the using of the causal particles, for, because of, &c. where good works are spoken of in Scripture, as in
Matt.

Matt. xxv. 34. Rev. vii. 15. makes on their side, and implies a merit of good works.

But there is no force or weight in such reasoning; for causal particles are often made use of in scripture, where only the order of Consequence is designed to be shown, though there be nothing of causality or efficiency in the case, *Matt. xvi. 2, 3. 1 John xvi. 27. 1 Cor. x. 15.* and divers other places.

5. But believers are often said to be worthy of the kingdom of Heaven, *Matt. x. 11. 2 Thes. i. 5. Rev. iii. 4.*

But the worthiness there spoken of notes only the character of the persons, not the dignity of their works; it speaks their meetness for Heaven, not the merit of their actions: or it may note the merits of Christ, through which they are accounted worthy, not their own.

5. But say they, we are commanded, *Phil. ii. 12.* to work out our own salvation; therefore works are necessary, and (if you believe them) the merit of these works to our obtaining salvation.

But to this I answer, That the Popish comment destroys the text; for we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling, not with pride and self-confidence; and we are to work, not with the assurance of speeding for the worth of our labour,

labour, but with the sense of our need of the divine help, and with the confidence that God will work in us both to will and to do of his own good pleasure, that is, of meer grace and favour.

The learned Papists had better let the Bible alone, as they force the poor ignorant ones to do; for they seldom touch that two-edg'd sword of the spirit, but they cut their own fingers with it, and turn the point of it into the very throat of their accursed cause.

Even their great champion *Bellarmino* was, at last, reduc'd to his famous *Tutissimum est*; after all, he is forc'd to confess, that such is the uncertainty of the doctrine of humane merits, such the danger of vain-glory, that it is safest to put our trust in the mercy and free favour of God. What need we any further witness? *habetis confitentem reum*, you have heard his blasphemy, and you have heard his fair acknowledgment, that he has been employing his time and pains, his wit and learning, to defend a Cause that he himself does not think it safe to stick to.

I now come to conclude all with a word or two by way of application.

1. Let us see hence our own vileness and unworthiness; we can merit nothing at the hands of God, but death and damnation, and that we have deserved over and over.

But

But if ever we obtain salvation, it must be by another's (to wit, the Lord Jesus Christ's) righteousness and merits, not our own; for we are all as an unclean thing in the sight of God, and with regard to the purity of his nature and strictness of his law, all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, *Isa. lxiv. 6.*

2. Learn to magnify the riches of the free grace of God, which does not only pardon and accept, but also reward us and our mean and worthless services.

Look but to sincerity, and a cup of cold water, given to a disciple in the name of a disciple, shall not go without a great and glorious reward, *Matt. x. 42.*

3. Be zealous of good works, and labour to abound in them, that you may have wherewith to answer them who object to the reformed, that they are solifidians, or such as preach up faith, to the detriment of charity and holy living.

Do all the good you can while you live, but trust no more in what you have done when you come to die as having any merit, than if you had done nothing at all.

Good works will be comfortable evidences of a sound faith; but sorry props to build our confidence on, or place our trust in, when we are just going to the bar of God.

I conclude all with the prayer of that holy publick-spirited servant of God, *Nebu-*

miab xiii. 14. compared with the 22d, Remember me, O my God, concerning this, and wipe not out the good deeds that I have done, for the house of my God, and for the offices thereof. Mind how he words the same Prayer for substance 22d Verse, Remember me, O my God, concerning this also, and spare me according to the greatness of thy mercy,



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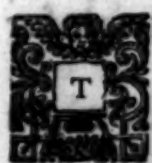


DISCOURSE XIV.

Against works of super-erogation.

MATT. XXV. 9.

*But the wise answered, saying, not so,
lest there be not enough for us and
you.*



THIS parable represents the state of professed Christians under the similitude of Virgins; because of the purity of the Christian doctrine and precepts, and the exemplariness of life and conversation, that ought to be in all those who name the name of Christ; who are under the strongest obligations possible to depart from all iniquity, great or small, secret or open, *2 Tim. ii. 19.*

It distinguisheth those Virgins into wise and foolish, *i. e.* sincere and hypocritical ones, *verse 2.* It

It shows that the best are not without their failings and blemishes in this life, in that they all, the wise as well as the foolish, slumbered and slept, *verse 5.*

And most lively represents their different state and frame, when the bridegroom the Lord Jesus Christ came.

The one had graces and truth in their hearts, and had evidenc'd it by it's proper fruits in their walk and course; the other were surpris'd, unprepared, their lamps were gone out, and they were left in darkness, horror, and confusion.

In this distress they cry out to the wise Virgins for help; give us, say they, of your oil, for our lamps are gone out, *verse 8.*

But in vain: the wise had but just oil enough for themselves, they had none to spare; not so, say they, least there be not enough for us and you.

No man can be benefitted by another man's grace and good works (I mean as to his personal and eternal salvation) none has any grace to spare for another, nor if he had, has he any right or capacity to transfer or communicate it.

Whence the observation lies plain against the Papists, that there are, nor can be, no works of supererogation. The best and most righteous man has no grace to spare, no overplus of merits or good works to be communicated

nicated for the help of others, to be deposited in the Churches treasury, and dispensed by the Pope to them that will pay well for it.

This point is so near a kin to that we last spoke of, the doctrine of merit, that I hope none will take offence, if they meet with some of the same things again, that have been said already; since, in so great affinity of the subjects treated of, it is scarce to be avoided.

In speaking to the present point, you will please to note with me the following particulars.

1. No meer man in this life can fully and perfectly obey all the Commandments of God: for how should a morally imperfect creature yield a full obedience to an every way perfect law? *The law is holy, and the commandment holy, just, and good, Rom. vii. 12. The law is spiritual: but we are carnal, sold under sin, verse 14. In many things we offend all, James iii. 2. And there is not a just man upon earth, that doth good, and sinneth not, Eccles. vii, 20.*

The conceit of sinless perfection in this life, since the fall, argues men utter strangers to the extent, and spirituality of the divine law, and their own hearts and lives.

No man is a self justiciary, but one who is a woeful stranger to God, his nature and law, and to himself, his life and actions.

All

All we think, say, and do in this life, is either sin it self, or defiled with sin; which adheres in greater or lesser degrees, to the best actions of the best men.

2. Though we cannot perform full and entire obedience to the law of God; yet this is still due from us to the Author of our being.

Though we have lost our power to obey, God has not lost his right to command and require obedience of us.

Universal, entire, perpetual obedience is naturally due unto God from all his creatures: if any of them have disabled themselves for it, they have not thereby disoblighd themselves; their iniquity has not procured them a release from their duty; their disobedience is still sin, and the full tail of duty may be justly requir'd of them, and they as righteously punished for the neglect of it.

God requires fallen man, as well as innocent man, to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with his Maker, *Micah* vi. 8. though he cannot now do any of this without special assistance; nor even with it, do all this perfectly in his present state of impotency and defilement.

3. The obedience, which God requires of us, is principally and chiefly that of the soul and inward man, and secondarily that of the body and outward man; which latter

is of no value, but as it flows from, and is expressive of the former, *Prov. xxiii. 26. My son give me thy heart. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, Matt. xxii. 37.*

Both are required, but where the latter only is yielded, the person and the performance are both an abomination to that God, who searcheth the heart and trieth the reins, who seeth not as man seeth, judgeth not according to outward appearance; but looketh into the heart, and searcheth even the inward parts of the belly.

So that the Hypocrites Religion is loathsome to God; and not only vain and unprofitable, but hurtful and mischievous to himself.

4. The least defect in our obedience, much more an habitual revolt from God, is death by the original law, the law of innocency given to *Adam* in and at his creation: and habitual and final disobedience is no less so by the law of grace, the Gospel remedying law; and that with farther aggravation on account of unbelief, and our rejecting the only remedy, which infinite wisdom and love has provided for us, and offered to us, *Gen. ii. 17. In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely dye, Gen. iii. 10. cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do*

do them, *Mark xvi. 16. He that believeth not shall be damn'd. Heb. ii. 3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*

So that it is evident, we and all mankind are under a sentence of death, subject to the wrath and curse of God, from which we cannot extricate our selves, neither can any meer creature deliver us.

And though a remedy, every way sufficient, be provided for us and tender'd to us, and God do even entreat us to accept it (such is his rich grace and mercy to poor lost sinners of mankind) yet notwithstanding, many do daily perish even where those gracious tenders are made and urg'd; which could not be, but for the power of lust, and the obstinacy of mens hearts in their unbelief; nor could that be, were we not under a dreadful impotency, though it be not of such a kind as to extenuate, but aggravate our guilt, and make us in the judgment of God, the world, and, sooner or later, in that of our own consciences, our own destroyers.

5. The Apostle does indeed say, *Rom. vi. 24.* That believers are not under the law, but under grace; but we must take great heed of giving that text an Antinomian gloss, which may be fatal to our souls, and destructive of their everlasting happiness.

Believers are not exempt from the law, as a rule of life, or bond of duty, though
they

they are freed from having their state finally determined by it, as a covenant of works; or falling finally under its sentence, according to the demerits of sin, and the rigour of strict and unqualified justice.

The sins of believers deserve death, but it shall not be inflicted on them; because Christ hath satisfied for their violation of the law, and they apprehend that satisfaction by faith, and plead it with God in prayer.

But still their sins are as properly meritorious of death in their own nature, and according to the tenour of the first covenant, as those of other men, and have some aggravations attending them, which the sins of others have not; which should make them exceeding humble, and no less thankful, for that super-abounding grace whereby they are delivered.

Such will never think or talk of meriting, much less of supererogating.

6. The impotency which we all labour under to fulfil the law of God, and perform his commands, is owing to the corruption of our natures, derived to us from the fall of our first parents; whereby we lost the image of God, and became unstable and weak as water, naturally disinclined to every, and disabled for any good work. *Thus by one man sin ent'ed the world, and death by sin, and so death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned, Rom. v. 12.* Ma-

Many and difficult disputes have been raised about this matter ; but Scripture and sad experience do both assure us, that this is the truth of our case, and it becomes us to seek out timely, and heartily, after our remedy, and not stand disputing about, or fretting at our disease, 'till it becomes incurable, or ends in death.

7. Though no meer man, hath, or ever can fulfil the law of God, yet our Lord Jesus Christ hath perfectly obeyed it, and hath also suffered the curse due to our transgression of it, in such a way as to render it fit for God, to forgive all them that believe on his name, *Psalms* xl. 6, 7, 8. *Rom.* iii. 24, 25, 26. *Rom.* v. 19. *For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners : so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.* And on account of his perfect obedience (inclusive of his sufferings) it is, that our sins are not imputed ; and that we are accepted, notwithstanding the defectiveness and imperfection of our inherent righteousness, which yet must be sincere, or there is no hope for us.

And this is not what the Papists call meriting, that we might merit ; but meriting that we might be pardoned, adopted, sanctified and saved ; and it was his divine nature, in personal union with his human one that gave this dignity, value, and efficacy to his
active

active and passive obedience, that they might be thus available on our behalf.

8. Though believers cannot perfectly obey all the commandments of God in this life, yet they are aiming at it, and making daily progress towards it, and shall perfectly attain to it in the life to come: there the spirits of just men are made perfect, *Heb. xii. 23.* and the whole Church of Christ, redeemed with his most precious blood, is made glorious, having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing, *Ephes. v. 27.*

And the blessed Apostle speaks of attaining unto the resurrection of the dead, though he had not yet attained, neither was already perfect, *Phil. iii. 11, 12.*

He who aims not at perfection has not attained to sincerity; and he who sincerely aims at sinless perfection, shall shortly attain thereunto.

9. The highest perfection of believers in this life goes no farther than the being freed from the guilt of sin, and liableness to condemnation, and being truly sanctified in every faculty of soul and body, being also continually going forward, or recovering from their falls with greater advantage; especially as to greater measures of watchfulness, more vehement breathings after perfection, greater fruitfulness in good works; in which, and the like respects, every evangelically

gelically righteous man is more excellent than his unconverted neighbour, *Prov. xii. 26.* and such are in an evangelical sense perfect, *Matt. v. 48.*

10. The Papists therefore do most directly contradict the scope and design of the Gospel, as well as the experience and confession of all the best men of all ages, when they assert that a man may not only do all that God requires of him, and so merit Heaven for himself, but even do more than his strict duty, and merit for others, and contribute to a fund of merit in the Church, for the benefit of those that have been deficient; which treasury, they say, the Pope has the key of, and may dispense for money at his own pleasure.

Shameless doctrine! horrid insolence! base imposition upon the reason, faith, and consciences of mankind! unspeakable damage to ensnared souls! and all to make ignorance and superstition the Purveyors for the lusts of pride, ambition, domineering, covetousness and impurity!

Let it here be consider'd briefly.

1. That the best men are not without their many sins and failings; and the better any man is, the more sensible he is of the number and heinousness of his own sins.

In this sense the Psalmist cries out, *Psal. xix. 12. Who can understand his errors?*
And

And the prophet *Isaiab. vi. 5. I am a man of unclean lips.* And holy *Job, chap. xlii. 6. I abhor my self, and repent in dust and ashes.*

2. The scripture is exprefs, that no man attains to a finless perfection in this life: therefore surely no man goes beyond his duty, or has any merit to spare for the use of others, *Luke xvii. 10. When ye have (or rather if ye had) done all these things which were commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.*

3. Heaven is the only place where finless perfection obtains: here on earth our silver is mix'd with dross, and our wine with water, and all our graces and duties with sin. If any could attain to finless perfection on earth, he should no longer undergo any suffering; for God does not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men.

4. The doctrine of evangelical counsels, on which the Papists build their works of supererogation, is a rotten, sandy foundation, and cannot support the vast building which they have endeavour'd to erect upon it.

By evangelical counsels, they tell us, they mean good works, which Christ has indeed commended to us, but not strictly commanded or required of us; we shall do well indeed if we do them, but we may for all that do well enough if we let them alone.

Q² They

They are counsels of perfection, which bind none but those who voluntarily bind themselves to the observance of them by a solemn vow.

And hence they say, that these counsels differ from precepts.

1. In that for the matter of them, Counsels are higher and more perfect, and so of harder and more difficult observation than bare Precepts are.

2. In regard of the subjects, Precepts reach and oblige all men, but Counsels are directed only to some particular ranks and orders of men, whom they call Religious; and even they, before they take on them the vow and habit of their order, are at liberty to engage themselves to the observance of them, or not.

3. He, they say, who breaks a commandment sins, but he that omits a counsel runs no hazard, or incurs any guilt.

4. In respect of the end and event, he who obeys the Precepts is only saved, but he who observes the Counsels has a higher degree of glory, and a larger reward in Heaven than others; for these they say, there are *aureolæ*, golden Crowns of a peculiar lustre and brightness provided.

Thus they coin a new Gospel out of their own idle brains, fill'd with doctrines which the true Gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ is an utter stranger to. Of

Of these evangelical counsels, or counsels of perfection, they say there are many; but they principally insist on these three (on the vows of performing which all their monastick Orders are built) *viz.* perpetual continency, regular obedience, and voluntary poverty.

That the Gospel does not contain any such counsels, the following hints may be sufficient to prove.

1. Their opinion contradicts the perfection of the moral law; and insinuates as if a greater perfection might be attained in this life, by observing somewhat that is not thereby enjoined, than by keeping and performing all that is: which is the highest reflection upon the wisdom and goodness of the supreme legislator.

2. All God's Counsels are Commands, because of his infinite perfection and absolute supremacy; and therefore the distinction here must needs be futile and vain.

The Scripture useth these two words in the same sense where God is spoken of, as in *Prov. i. 30. They would none of my counsel.* *Luke vii. 30. The Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves.* *Acts xx. 27. I have not shunned to declare unto you the whole counsel of God.* And divers other places.

3. Christ does not only counsel, but command all his disciples to be perfect, *i. e.* evangelically; which no man can be, who does not aim at legal perfection, and is not daily reaching forward towards it, as much as in him lies. *Matt. v. 48. Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*

4. There is no instance of any thing of a moral nature, which the Papists produce to justify their doctrine of evangelical counsels, which is not either commanded by God, or invented by man; and the former are universally to be complied with, in the circumstances wherein they are commanded, and the latter to be absolutely rejected.

The love of enemies, for instance, and the bearing of injuries, is not only counselled, but commanded, *Matt. v. 44. Matt. v. 39.* chastity, or even single life is commanded to those who have the gift, and in whose case no other circumstance renders marriage a duty, *1 Cor. ix. 5.* Voluntary poverty, or the forsaking of all for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, *Luke xiv. 23. Matt. xvi. 24.*

All the rest are meer will-worship, and will only subject us to that bitter taunt, and severe reproach, *Who has required this at your hands?* *Isa. i. 12.*

But

But the Papists tell us, that our Lord, in dealing with the young man, *Matt. xix. 21.* gave him a counsel of perfection; if thou wilt be perfect, sell that which thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven.

To which the answer is plain, that here was no counsel of perfection, but a trial of the young man's integrity, whether he loved Christ and Heaven, or this world better; and whenever there is manifestly such a competition, it is every man's duty to quit all that he has and cleave to Christ, and follow him in hope of eternal life.

2. But, say they, does not the Apostle *1 Cor. vii. 25, 40.* distinguish between a command and a counsel, or opinion?

Ans. The Apostle is there speaking of a matter in its general nature indifferent, about which therefore he would not fix a common rule, which should determine every one to act alike; but only give them such general measures as each man should apply to his own particular case prudently and impartially, and then act as his conscience inform'd him, and as he apprehended to be really his duty.

3. Nor is our Lord to be understood to commend celibacy as a counsel of perfection, *Matt. xix. 12.* but only to direct that every state and condition of life is to be ent'ed into

and managed as may most conduce to the glory of God and the salvation of our souls, which no one that considers will say is a Counsel of perfection, but a direct precept; since whatsoever we do, we are to do it for the glory of God, and the securing and promoting our own salvation, *1 Cor. x. 31.*

4. The Apostles were some of them married, and some of them unmarried; but it is plain, that they placed no perfection in a single life, but answered the call of God therein, as might best suit their own circumstances, and the work wherein they were engaged.

5. And the same may be said of *Paul's* preaching gratis, which he declares he did not do, as expecting to merit any thing by so doing, but as complying with the general precept, let all things be done to edifying, *1 Cor. xiv. 26.*

Upon the whole, it is plain that this (as well as the other Popish doctrines) is calculated to turn the Church into a worldly monarchy; and set the Pope above all that is called God, or is august; and to make the Priests Lords of men's consciences, that they may be so of their estates, liberties, and very lives.

Use 1. Bless God that has delivered us hitherto from Popery, and has not yet suffered us to be again entangled in that yoke of bondage,

bondage; may our sins never provoke him to do it.

2. Let us have a true sense of our own infirmity, and how greatly we come short of our duty in every instance.

3. Labour for an interest in Christ's perfect righteousness, and to be our selves endued with the evangelical perfection of sincerity.

4. Neither presume we on our own righteousness, nor despair of obtaining righteousness in and through Christ; but let the Gospel, Protestant doctrine of free grace, excite us to, and encourage us in a constant readiness to, and fruitfulness in every good work. *Thus let us be steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, and we shall find to our comfort, that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord,* 1 Cor. xv. 58.



DISCOURSE XV.

Of Justification by Faith.

ROM. V. I.

Therefore being justified by Faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

THE doctrine of justification has been fitly stiled by our first reformer, *Luther, Articulus stantis vel cadentis Ecclesia.*

It is the foundation of all our comfort and peace in the present life, and all our hope in the next.

Great pity it is, that there has been so much difference about it among great and good men, who hold the head Christ Jesus.

Arminian and *Antinomian* extreams have too much troubled the Church of Christ, and made the thirsty souls of awakened sinners afraid

afraid of meeting with poison, where they needed and looked for refreshment.

Wise and holy men have differed in their notions and expressions concerning this doctrine, and have too often been causelessly, or excessively jealous of one another.

And the common enemies of our christian profession have made their advantage of our mistakes and jealousies.

But thanks be to God, our Catechisms, and the confessions of the reformed Churches hold forth enough in this great point for us to agree in, and a little moderation and good temper would make us over look, or bear with one another in the rest.

Our ever watchful enemies of the Roman Communion improve our differences, and take all opportunities to heat us against one another, that we may less mind them, and be at leisure to oppose them.

But it is they (of all that ever were called Christians) who have most poisoned our fountains and troubled our streams, in what relates to the doctrine of justification.

I would, from the words read at this time, give you a brief account of their doctrine, and the dangerous and damnable tendency of it; and at the same time endeavour to set and keep you right, in whatever is of most importance, in relation to the method of God's grace, in pardoning and restoring lost sinners.

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The Apostle here tells us, we are justified by faith; and that through our Lord Jesus Christ: and that being so, we have peace with God.

Whence observe that our being justified by faith, through the Lord Jesus Christ, is the great ground of our peace with God.

Under this general, let me enlarge a little on the following propositions.

1. All mankind are sinners fallen from God, and in a lost and undone estate and condition by nature. How this comes about, you have often heard, and the Scriptures are plain and full in it. God made man upright, but he soon found out many inventions, *Ec. vii. 29.* *By one man sin entred into the world, and death by sin: and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned,* *Rom. v. 12.* We are all by nature children of wrath, *Eph. ii. 3.*

The law of God was violated by *Adam's* first transgression: death was made the wages of sin by God's wise and righteous constitution, *Rom. vi. 23.* The sin of *Adam* was justly imputed to all his posterity; the Image of God, which he had lost himself, he could no longer convey to us; actual sin will unavoidably follow upon original.

We are all then born guilty of death, and from the first use of reason, do daily contract new guilt; and therefore (unless
God

God determine and declare otherwise) must certainly die and perish in this deplorable state.

2. In order therefore that any sinner may be recovered and saved from so great a death, he must pass under a double change; one relative, whereby his state towards God is altered; the other real, whereby his temper and disposition is changed, and the divine Image is restored in him.

The former of these we call justification, the latter sanctification.

Our business at present is with the first of these.

3. The Papists do most grossly corrupt the Christian religion, by confounding these two, and running them one into another.

The Council of *Trent* describes justification, as the Protestants according to the Scriptures do sanctification; and when they have made our justification consist in inherent righteousness, they drop the true Scripture-notion of it, as grounded on, and flowing from imputed righteousness.

They make justification to be the abolishing of sin, rather than the pardoning of the sinner, and forgiving him his trespasses; which is quite different from the account the Scriptures give us of these matters.

4. And hereby they destroy our hopes, our peace and comfort; for our best inherent righteousness

teousness is imperfect, and cannot bear the test of the divine law and justice: if we have no better, we must needs perish, and in the mean time pine and languish in the fearful expectation of wrath to come.

Can a partial and imperfect righteousness (the acts whereof are daily intermitted or remitted) give us boldness towards God, or settle our minds and consciences in true peace and tranquility? such a bed is too short for us to stretch our selves on; such a garment will not cover us, as I may allude to the Prophets expression, *Isaiab* xxviii. 20.

We have sinned, and we must have something more solid than our own righteousness, to interpose between the law and justice, the accusations of Satan, and the clamours of our own consciences; or it will go hard with us in the day of evil, in the hour of temptation, and especially in the hour of death.

5. The use of the words, justify and justification, will not bear the application the Papists make of them: they are law terms, and when used in a physical sense, become scarce, if at all, intelligible.

Who ever heard of justifying a man by making him inherently holy? this is a new device of the Council of Trent, and they may take and keep the honour and comfort of

of it to themselves, no body that I know of will envy it them.

6. Justification always notes a judicial act of God, as supreme Lord and Judge, absolving the sinner from guilt on considerations, and in a method devised by himself, and suited to his own infinite perfections.

If we had not sinned, the law would have acquitted us; and God himself would have absolved us according to the tenour of it, on supposition that any malicious enemy should have accused us.

But as we are sinners, we cannot be made such as have never sinned: but God has found out a way wherein he may deal with us, as though we had not transgressed; and he may be just, and the justifier of the ungodly (those who were so, and still are so in the eye of the law strictly and rigorously interpreted) even of them that believe in Jesus, *Rom. iv. 5. Chap. iii. 26.* whose faith doth not make them to be no sinners, but makes them fit (according to a divine constitution) for God to forgive them, though, or notwithstanding that, they are. The renewal of our nature, or the holiness of our actions cannot take away our past guilt; something much more important must intervene, or our sins that are past would sink us into Hell, though we should live never so holily for the future; nay, though we should not be

be guilty of a sinful thought, through the whole remaining course of our lives.

7. We must then be justified not by our own works and merits, but through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, *Rom. iii. 24.*

This is the great mystery of christian godliness, that we who have no proper perfect inherent righteousness of our own, should be justified by the righteousness of another, imputed to us, and received by faith.

God sent his son to die, and to be made sin and a curse for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, and so be perfectly redeemed from the curse of the law, and delivered from wrath to come.

This is what the Scriptures of the old and new Testament are full of; and though it be easy to run into mistakes and misapprehensions, and much more into some unwary or faulty expressions about it, yet we are not to let go, or change the substance of this doctrine, that makes so much for the exalting the free grace of God, and quieting the minds of sinners, awakened with the sense of guilt and fears of wrath.

We must take heed, as that we harden none in presumption, so that we make not sad the hearts of any, whose hearts God would not have made sad; if we divert any from taking sanctuary in the blood of Christ, and trusting wholly in his merits and righteousness,

ousness, we take the right course to sink them into despair, and so harden them in impenitency.

The doctrine of free grace must not be concealed, though we know before-hand that some will abuse it; but we must endeavour so to state it, as to give them no just handle to pervert it, and then we shall not be answerable for their folly, perverseness, or ruin.

8. The free remission of sins through the blood of Christ cannot consist with the Popish doctrines of human satisfaction, Purgatory, venial sins, &c.

Indeed these, and their other doctrines of the same tendency, are so many blows at the root, and have a direct tendency to overturn the whole frame of the Gospel.

What place for human merits, and satisfaction? What room for Purgatory? If Christ has fully satisfied divine justice, and his satisfaction shall be imputed to us, made ours to its proper ends and benefits, on our sincere believing on him.

The doctrine of Christ's satisfaction and redemption, and our justification by faith truly opened, chaseth away the Popish errors, as the rising of the sun banisheth the darkness of the night.

What an alteration did the reformation make in the world in this respect? and since it has declined, how has former darkness in

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a great measure returned? may God revive his work in the midst of the years, and in the midst of the years make known, and in wrath remember mercy, *Hab. iii. 2.*

The doctrine of venial sins, and free remission through the blood of Christ, cannot consist; for that blood is as necessary to purge away the guilt of the least sin, as of the greatest.

We must be sprinkled with the blood of Christ, or the destroying Angel will slay us for a vain thought, as well as for murder or adultery.

9. The doctrine of justification by the free grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, is so far from overthrowing the necessity of good works, that indeed the contrary doctrine of the Papists is justly chargeable therewith.

For their doctrine nourisheth self confidence, destroys the love of God in the soul, extinguisheth the principles, and removes the chief grounds of gratitude for our redemption: it leaves us to act wholly upon the bottom of servile slavish fear, and from respects, which can never produce that child-like affection, and obedience, which is that only that God requires, and is pleased with.

10. The Romish doctrine in this point throws the utmost contempt upon the death, righteousness and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ,

Christ, that can be ; since it wholly supposeth that Christ hath not made full satisfaction for our sins, but we must satisfie for them over again : it teacheth us to trust more in what is wrought in us, or done by us, than in that redemption, which he hath wrought out for us ; it makes him at most, but an half saviour ; it derides that imputation of Christ's righteousness, without which no one can be justified or saved ; it monstrously teacheth us to distrust Christ's merits ; and yet at the same time to rely on those of the *Virgin Mary*, The Apostles, nay, of any that the Pope will please to canonize, though they lived notoriously wicked lives, died horrible deaths, and their names are detestable to posterity, wherever any thing of truth, or vertue remains ; such were *Tho: a Becket*, and our Gunpowder Sts. *Garnet*, &c.

11. The Popish doctrine, not only affronts the imputation, but over-throws the application of our redemption by Jesus Christ ; since to that the imputation of his righteousness is necessary, which they impudently deny, and even like so many *Julians* and *Lucians* scoffingly deride, calling it putative righteousness, &c.

The Scripture teacheth us, that Christ Jesus is made to us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. that by the obedience of one, many are made

righteous, *Rom. v. 19.* That to him that believes righteousness is imputed, *Rom. iv. 11.* with many other expressions of like import: but this they cannot bear, the law of faith excludes boasting, and therefore they had rather venture themselves under the law of works, though they perish in their iniquity.

If they may not go halves at least with him in the honour of it, they will not accept of salvation, no, not from Christ himself, though there is none else, from whose hands they may obtain it, *Acts iv. 12.*

I take the imputation of righteousness to lie in these three things.

1. In that Christ was made a proper sacrifice for us, died in our place and stead.

2. That God accepted this sacrifice of his, and declared his acceptance of it.

3. That we partake of it, our faith answering God's offer.

God has received the atonement as a means of satisfaction to his justice; and we receive it by faith, as a means of our reconciliation to an offended God, and the only ground of our hope and comfort.

And what there is, or can be, in such an imputation for any reasonable man to quarrel at, or find fault with, I confess, I cannot see.

But yet men of reprobate minds, and hurried away with prejudices, will be quarrelling whether with, or without cause.

Obj. 1.

Obj. 1. They say if Christ's death be made ours, and we are reckoned to have died in him, then we are our own redeemers and saviours.

Ans. They take us wrong, and indeed I doubt wilfully mistake our meaning; we have no such notion of the matter; but are indeed as far, if not farther from it than themselves can be: we say Christ died to save us from our sins, not to make us our own saviours.

His death was not our personal act, neither physically, nor legally; though we derive the greatest benefits and advantages from it, and do therefore joyfully shew it forth from time to time.

Obj. 2. Some say this doctrine of imputation makes us as righteous as Christ himself.

Ans. But to this we reply, that 'tis all a fiction to charge us with any such sentiments; and we look on it, as no less than blasphemy for any to assert such a thing: the righteousness of Christ received by faith frees us from condemnation; on account of that, we are acquitted of guilt; we are accepted into favour, become the adopted Children of God; and have right and title to, and shall in due time be admitted into Heaven; and more we need not, nor desire. Christ is our elder brother, let them rob him of any of his dignities or prerogatives that dare; we

desire, that he may always, and in all things have the preheminance, *Col. i. 18.*

Obj. 3. The Papists and some others charge the Protestant doctrine of imputation, as making Christ a sinner, and the greatest of sinners.

Ans. If any have dropt an harsh or uncouth expression, we are not chargeable with it; the common Protestant doctrine of imputation, gives no handle to any such cavil: we say indeed that Christ was made sin for us, and we say it after the Apostle *Paul* (who never taught any false doctrine after his call to the Apostleship, whatever the pretended successors of *Peter* have done) *2 Cor. v. 21.* but then we generally understand it, he was made a sacrifice for sin, or a sin offering; but we never thought him properly a sinner, for if he had, he could not have been a sponsor or surety for us, nor could his death have been meritorious of pardon, the divine favour, and an everlasting inheritance for us.

Obj. 4. But they say we are *Solifidians*, and cry up faith to the neglect of good works.

Ans. We are for faith in its place, and works in theirs: faith to apply Christ to us for redemption; works as the fruits of faith, and the evidences of our regeneration and Gospel right, through the merits of Christ to eternal life.

Use 1. See that we trust not in our selves that we are righteous; lay no undue stress upon our own works, religious duties, acts of charity, &c. say as good Mr. Herbert, It is a good work if sprinkled with the blood of Christ, not else.

2. Live by faith on Christ for pardon and grace.

3. Study to be useful and exemplary, and to cut off occasion from them that seek occasion to misrepresent us and our profession.

4. Take all opportunity to shew forth the death of Christ, and labour to do it aright, and walk as those that have been with Jesus.

5. When our own death approacheth, let the death of Christ arm and encourage us. Rom. 8, *ad finem.* *He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all; How shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again; who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.*



DISCOURSE XVI.

Of Idolatry.

JOHN. V. 21.

*Little Children keep your selves from
Idols. Amen.*



THESE words are the close of the first Epistle of the beloved Apostle *John*, that great Preacher and pattern of Love.

He bespeaks those he writes to as his children : the Pastoral spirit is a most affectionate spirit ; he calls them little Children ; for those the parents are commonly fondest of. They can best bear it, and most need it.

And what is the charge he gives them ? To keep themselves from Idols ; those bewitching things, those children's toys and bawbles, which that tender age is commonly fonder of,

of, than more grown persons are of their wealth or their preferments; those hateful things to God; those destructive ones to the souls of men.

Idols, what are they? The Apostle has given us their definition; an Idol is nothing in the world, 1 *Cor.* viii. 4. it is something in appearance, and yet nothing in reality; yet not a meer nothing, but such a nothing as has real effects, has wrought much mischief in the world, and brought unspeakable damage to it.

Such a nothing as usurps the throne of God, debaucheth the hearts of men, brings calamities and desolation upon churches and kingdoms.

Such a nothing as is the object of God's jealousy, and provokes his fury against all those that bow down to it.

When a shadow is treated as a substance, and the Being forsaken for it, unspeakable ruin and desolation treads on the heels of such a management.

My dear children, saith the Apostle, keep your selves from Idols.

You cannot be too wary, cautious, and watchful, in this point.

If you are surpriz'd, you are undone.

And he seals this caution with an *Amen*, to shew the importance of it: There is no sin in the world that men need more to be warn'd

warn'd of, and watchful against, than Idolatry; we are prone to it, many are busy to seduce us into it; and if we are beguil'd, or terrified into a compliance, the consequences will be most fatal; the spirit of God will withdraw from us, we shall become brutish and stupid, and shall stick at no other wickedness: and all manner of plagues will break in upon us suddenly and irresistibly.

Though we are called Christians, if we are Idolaters, God will not spare us. An Idolatrous Christian, and such every Papist is, is ten times worse than a Jew or a Mahometan.

And the great cause, why Jews and Mahometans continue what they are, is the idolatry of those who call themselves christians.

Our Images are their snares and stumbling blocks.

Doctrin. All Idolatry, and particularly the worship of Images is forbidden to, and ought to be not only forsaken, but abhorred by all who pretend to the name of Christians.

Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from this iniquity, 2 Tim. ii. 19.

In treating of this point, concerning the idolatry of image-worship, and the sinfulness and danger of it, I shall propound to
your

your consideration the following particulars.

1. We deny not the lawfulness of the arts of Statuary and Painting; they are the gifts of God, entertaining and useful to mankind.

The pictures or statues of our princes, our friends and benefactors, our dear relations, may be made and kept in memory of them, and a civil respect may be paid to them.

They serve for ornament, for delight, for remembrance; and thus far no one that I know of blames or scruples them.

The picture of a Minister, by whose doctrine and exhortations we have profited, or a Prince, or General, who has been a publick benefactor, and a blessing to the age in which he lived, may help to preserve a grateful remembrance of him in our minds, may renew the memorial of his doctrine or example, may excite our gratitude to God for having lent him us.

And there is no superstition in all this that I know of, though there may be some danger (though not unavoidable) lest we carry it too far.

2. But we may not pay any religious adoration or veneration to the images of God or Christ, or an Angel or a Saint, graven or painted by art and man's device; for this is expressly forbidden in the second Commandment,

ment, and is downright idolatry, if there be any such thing in the world.

The Papists distinguish between adoration and veneration, and say, the former is proper to God, the latter may be given, and is due to Images; but in vain, their veneration is religious, and therefore abominable, because expressly forbidden.

Their common people to be sure know no difference, and make no distinction in their actions, between adoring and venerating: they prostrate themselves, bow, kneel, kiss their images with great devotion, and even pray to them; and if this be not Idolatry, what is?

3. The Papists cannot agree among themselves how Images are to be worshipped; some of them say, they are to be worshipped properly and for themselves, so as that the worship terminates in the image:

Others assert, that the worship that is given them, is only analogical, improper, and reductive, and that all the worship that is given to the Image terminates on the prototype that is represented by it.

Some assert that the same worship is to be given to the image as to the prototype; others say, there is a great difference between the one and the other, and that it is only a much lower worship that they give to the Image: but let it be as low as it will, while

while it is religious, it cannot but be idolatrous, and provoking to the pure eyes of God's jealousy.

4. The Council of *Trent* has established the doctrine of the second Council of *Nice* concerning the worship of Images; and therefore, though they express themselves with caution and ambiguity, yet they sufficiently let us into their meaning; for that Council expressly establish'd the adoration of Images, and anathematiz'd all that in doctrine should deny it, or in practice withhold it.

But this was not till seven hundred eighty seven years after Christ, when the Church was grown strangely corrupt and degenerate.

And though some scrupled the word *adoring*, and chose rather to express the worship they paid to Images by the word *venerating*; yet the Synod thinks such too scrupulous, and gives up the distinction, and curseth them that will not adore the Images of the Saints, and says, they are hypocrites and revilers of the Saints. Thus the mother of harlots and abominations boasts of, and glories in her whoredoms and fornications, and pays the same worship to a stock, as to *Jehovah* and the Redeemer.

5. The daily practice of the Papists plainly proves, that we do not slander them, or unjustly aggravate matters to render them odious.

For

For all who have been in Popish countries, and observed their worship, do jointly testify, that every where the common people prostrate themselves before their Images; kiss them; offer incense to them; erect altars to their honour; offer prayers, and make vows to them; keep holy-days in honour of them; and abstain from no token of adoration and respect to those Idols, that is due to God himself.

And even their learned men harden them in this impiety, saying, that the highest worship *latría*, is as due to the Cross, as to Christ himself, God-man who suffered on it.

Bellarmino tells us, that Images are to be worshiped, not only for the sake, or in honour of the persons whom they represent; but even for themselves, and so as that the worship may lawfully terminate in the Images themselves.

On Good-friday the Priest holds up the Cross, and the Choir with the people sing, *Come let us adore it*: and they pray, *Hail holy Cross, our only hope in this time of passion, increase righteousness in the godly, and grant forgiveness to the guilty*. A precious prayer! to ask forgiveness of sins of a wooden, or a silver, or though it be a golden Cross!

Thus they ascribe equal power to a piece of wood or stone, or silver or gold, as to the blood and merit of Christ, or even as to Christ himself.

6. The

6. The worship of Images (whatever colours its Patrons may put upon it) is utterly unlawful, and is indeed downright Idolatry. I shall give you but three or four Arguments for the unlawfulness of it; but if you will weigh them in an equal ballance, I believe you will find them to be conclusive.

1. God himself has expressly forbidden us to make any Images on a religious account, or to bow down to, or worship them.

This is the very letter of the second Commandment, *Exod. xx. 45. Thou shalt not make unto thy self any graven Image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; thou shalt not bow down thy self to them nor serve them, for I the lord, thy God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me, and shew mercy unto thousands in them that love me and keep my commandments.*

The like you have *Levit. xxvi. 1. Ye shall make you no idols nor graven image, neither rear you up a standing image, neither shall you set up any image of stone in your land to bow down unto it, for I am the Lord your God.*

And again, *Deut. iv. 15, 16. Take therefore good heed unto your selves, lest you*
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corrupt your selves, and make you a graven Image.

Is it possible for words to express a divine prohibition more fully than these do? or can any divine command be more grossly transgressed, than this is by those of the Romish Communion?

But the Patrons of Image-worship say, that this is a positive Command given only to the Jews, not a moral one that equally and alike obligeth all mankind. This however is a meer shift and subterfuge; for the end of this command is plainly, that the worship of God may be preserved pure and entire, and it forbids the making of Images, to wit, of God, or any divine person, and not only the worshipping of them; because it is an affront to the Majesty of God, to think that he can be resembled by, or to any creature, in the way of material and visible resemblance: and the New Testament repeats and enforceth this Command, *Acts* xv. 20. Christians are commanded to abstain from pollutions of Idols.

1 Cor. x. 14. Wherefore my dearly beloved flee from Idolatry. Further, It is a Principle known by the light of nature, that God is not to be worshipped in or by Images, though indeed the heathen herein, as in many other instances, in the things which they knew, corrupted themselves and sinned against

against their light, as alas is too ordinary even among Christians ; therefore the Apostle argues with the men of *Athens* upon this, as an universal granted principle, that the Godhead is not like unto Gold or Silver, or stone graven by art and man's device, *Acts* xvii. 29. And justly reproacheth the heathen *Romans*, for changing the glory of the incorruptible God, into an Image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things, *Rom.* i. 23. And many of the Heathens (especially in the more early and purer ages of the world) would not admit Images into their Temples ; as *Plutarch*, *Tacitus* and others testify.

They further think to bring themselves off by distinguishing between an Idol and an Image ; an Idol, they say, is a representation of what has no real being, as the false Gods of the Heathens ; but an Image represents what really is, and is worthy of regard and respect : but this distinction will not help them, because the divine Law acknowledgeth it not ; and no man has authority to distinguish where the Law does not. The golden Calf, which did then really exist, is called an Idol, *Acts* 7. 41. and they who worshipped it are stiled Idolaters, though it was made to be a symbol of the divine presence, and therefore was not the Image of a non-existent thing.

Every created thing becomes an Idol, when it or the representation of it, is made an object of worship; such were the brazen-serpent, and *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image, and the Image of the sun, moon and stars, and of deceased men, which the Heathens worshipped, were Images of real things, and not of meer fancies, or the ideas of idle brains.

In short, The Papists have no way to get rid of the authority and convictive evidence of the second Commandment, but by blotting it (not out of the Bible, that would have been too gross and easily detected, and was utterly out of their power, but) out of their Catechisms and Manuals of devotion, whereby they are self-condemned, and Hereticks in the most strict and proper sense of that so often abused word.

2. The worship of Images is not only forbidden, but it is forbidden under the notion of Idolatry; which is a crime of heinous magnitude and crying guilt. The Scripture and the primitive Church condemn all Images made for worship, under this notion, that they are idolatrous, *Isa. ii. 8, 9. Their Land also is full of Idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made, i. e. their Images, and the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself, therefore forgive them not.*

Who-

Whoever therefore worships an Image, bows down to an Idol.

Among the *Israelites*, not only they who worshipped *Baal* and other false Gods, but they who worshipped the golden Calf, and the Calves of *Dan* and *Bethel*, were Idolaters.

3. If Images might lawfully be worshipped, it must be either in and for themselves, or for the sake, and on account of their prototypes, or that which they represent; but they cannot lawfully be worshipped either way, therefore not at all.

It must needs be unlawful to worship them on their own account, because they are the work of mens hands; and the work must needs be beneath the workman in dignity; and no worship can be due from a superior to an inferior. The Scripture often urgeth this argument, *Psalms cxv. 4. Their idols are silver and gold the work of mens hands. Ver. 8. They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them. See Isa. xl. 19, 20. Jer. x. 14. Every man is brutish in his knowledge, every Founder is confounded by the graven image, for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them. Hab. ii. 18, 19. What profiteth the graven image that the maker thereof hath graven it? the molten image and teacher of lies, that the maker of his work trusteth therein to make*
him
S 2

him dumb idols? Wo unto him that saith to the wood awake, to the dumb stone arise; it shall teach, behold it is laid over with gold and silver, and there is no breath at all in the midst of it.

And it is no less unlawful to worship Images on account of their prototypes, or what they resemble: for if they are made to resemble God, the very making of them is a transgression of an express divine Command, much more the worshipping them; and if they are to resemble some saint, he has no right to our worship, as we have heretofore proved; and if the substance may not be worshipped, surely the shadow much less may; if I may not worship *St. Peter*, much less may I his shadow passing by me, even though I were miraculously healed by it, as some were, *Acts 5. 15.*

4. This practice was utterly unknown in, and to the first and purest ages of the Christian Church; and was brought in by those who were evidently the forerunners of Antichrist. *Origen, Tertullian, Lactantius*, and others declaim against it as a vile abuse, a horrid profanation, and downright idolatry. The famous Council of *Eliberis* declares, that pictures ought not to be in Churches, nor any thing to be painted on the Walls that should be worshipped or adored.

The Fathers do often object to the Heathens their worship of Images: would they not, think you, have retorted the objection upon them, if the practice of the primitive Church had been conformable to that of the present Church of *Rome*?

Neither did the *Jews* ever object to the Christians of those times their worshipping of Images, which they would most certainly have done, had they been chargeable with any such practice; for there is no nation upon earth so zealous against Images as they have been, ever since their return from the Babylonish captivity; so that one of the main hindrances of their conversion to Christianity at this day, seems to be the abhorrence of, and the scandal they take at the Image-worship of the *Romish* Church;

Nay, the most moderate and learned (as generally the most learned are the most moderate) of our adversaries give up the point, and declare freely, that Image-worship is a groundless innovation. *Cassander* owns, that it was long before Images were suffered to be in Churches, and that the Christians of those times abhorred the worshipping of them. And *Erasmus* saith, that even till the times of *Jerome*, many Religious men would not endure that an Image graven or painted should be seen in a Church or Temple, or place of worship. It were easy to add other tes-

timonies, but these of two so great men may suffice.

The cavils of the Papists against our doctrine in this matter are scarce worth mentioning, and so far from needing a set refutation, that they confute themselves.

1. Their first goodly objection is from *Psalms* xcix. 5. worship at his footstool, so we render it; but they would have it worship his footstool, viz. the Ark.

But besides that their Version is a manifest force upon the text, it is plain, that not the object, but the place of worship is there noted, as in the 9th verse of the same *Psalms*, worship at his holy hill.

2. But say they, did not God appoint Cherubims in his Temple, and the making of the brazen serpent in the wilderness?

Ans. He did so, but neither of them for worship; and when the latter was so abused, *Hezekiah* broke it in pieces, and call'd it in scorn *Nebushtan*, a piece of brass, 2 *Kings* xviii. 4.

3. Does not the Apostle tell the *Galatians*, that Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth before their eyes, as crucified among them? *Gal.* iii. 1.

Ans. He doth so; but he is to be understood as speaking of the Word and Sacraments, not of a Crucifix, or a material Image to be worshiped by them.

4. But

4. But did not the primitive Christians sign themselves, and one another with the sign of the Cross?

Ans. If they did, they did not worship a material Image of it.

Neither was the practice so early or universal as some pretend; nor had it ever, that I can find, a divine warrant, or any promise from God of a blessing, and therefore may be, one would think, more innocently let alone, than used, however than imposed.

Use 1. Let us stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free. Take heed of yielding to superstitious usages, lest they lead to more ungodliness.

2. Labour we to maintain worthy conceptions of God in our minds, and learn to worship him as a spirit, in spirit and in truth.

3. Lament the misery the fall has plung'd humane minds into, that we are naturally so prone to lean to sense and fancy in things wherein they have least to do, as in our conceptions of God, and worship of him.

4. It is reasonable and just to sacrifice the best and most valuable life, rather than worship a dead Image.

5. Nothing is so wicked and foolish, but somebody may be found to defend it, and something like reason may be said for it by men of parts

and learning, that have a self interest at stake.

6. Let us daily and earnestly pray to God, that he will famish all the Idols of the earth, *Zeph. ii. 11.* That he will fill the world with the knowledge and fear of himself; and then all Idol worship will soon cease, and there will be an utter end of Popery, and so we may hope for the conversion of *Pagans, Jews* and *Mahometans*, and that the name and the praise of our God, shall be one throughout all the earth.





DISCOURSE XVII.

Against religious service in an unknown
Tongue.

I COR. iv. 15.

*I will pray with the Spirit, and I will
pray with the understanding also:*



S the Church of *Rome* has corrupted the christian faith and practice; so has she in a special manner defiled the instituted worship of God, rendering it absur'd, vain, and even (in their way of managing it) abominable.

We shewed you the last time the unreasonableness and absurdity of their worshipping Images; we are now to consider their praying and performing other parts of publick worship, in an unknown tongue.

They pray in *Latin*, and they baptize in *Latin*, and they celebrate the *Eucharist* (after they

they have turned it into quite another thing, which they call the Mass) in *Latin*, and that in defiance of reason, and good sense; of Scripture, and of the concurrent practice of all former ages.

The Chapter, in which my text is, is a full confutation of their absur'd and wicked practice herein.

By praying with the spirit here, seems to be meant, praying by the extraordinary gift of the Holy Ghost, whereby they were enabled to preach and pray in languages which they had never learnt, that so they might be capable of edifying those, to whom the several languages were natural.

But some were ready to turn those gifts into matter of ostentation and vain glory, and neglect that edification, which was the end for which they were given: for this the Apostle particularly reproves those *Corinthians* in this Chapter, and adviseth and exhorteth, that all things be done to edifying, *verse 26.*

Pray, and so preach (for the case is the same in both) with the spirit and welcome; but see that it be with the understanding also: that is, not your own only, but of those to whom you speak from God, and in whose name, or on whose behalf you speak to him.

Doctrine. That publick worship, and prayer in special, should be performed in a language,

guage, which they, who attend on and join in it, do well understand.

Publick worship should be in the language of the Country in which it is performed, or which they ordinarily speak, who attend such worship.

What is the reason that we come together to worship God in publick assemblies? Is it not in obedience to the divine command, and in expectation of that blessing which he has promised?

Is it not that we may be edified? that is, that our knowledge may be enlarged, our faith confirmed, our love enflamed, our purposes settled, our lives reformed, our hopes of Heaven established, and immoveably fixt on the rock Christ Jesus, and the promises of that covenant which he has purchased, and ratified with his most precious blood.

And can sounds without sense be an apt means, a proper instrument of all this? surely a man must be bereaved of common sense, to imagine it can.

To insist particularly on prayer, and the case as it lies between the Church of *Rome* and us in relation to that.

1. The parts of which prayer consists do all of them require, and even imply, that he who prayeth understands what he saith, or what is said to God on his behalf; i. e. that it

it be made in a language he is throughly acquainted with.

Can I adore the great God, by pattering, or hearing pattered over, a parcel of words, whose sense and meaning I am an utter stranger to? Can I give God the glory of his attributes and of his works, by uttering, or hearing uttered in his presence, words, which convey no Idea of him (no, nor of any thing else) to my mind?

Can I make confession of my sins to God in words which to me signify nothing at all? Is it possible a broken and contrite heart should accompany the acknowledgment of sins, which I have no opportunity of knowing, whether (as they are there confessed in my name) I have ever been guilty of or not?

Can faith and importunity accompany the petitions which another makes mine, without my knowing what they contain? The like may be said of intercession for others, and giving of thanks for mercies received; if ever there was such a thing as offering the sacrifice of fools, without considering that men do evil, this is it, *Ec. v. 1.*

2. Yet the Papists have established this for a law; and it is the constant practice of their Church, that their Sacraments be administered and their prayers be offered up in an unknown tongue: and they have proceeded to that pitch of madness, as to pronounce all those

those accursed, who will not comply with them herein : the Council of *Trent* is express herein, and their learned Cardinal *Bellarmino* sets himself to defend this infamous and absurd practice.

They will have all their divine offices (as they call them) performed in *Hebrew*, *Greek*, or *Latin*, which they say exhibits to us a footstep of the divine Trinity, and that those three languages were sanctified upon the cross.

An idle and absurd fancy! besides that they contradict it in their practice, confining themselves in a manner wholly to the *Latin* tongue in their publick worship.

They will indeed permit some small parts of the office of the Mass, to be translated into the vulgar tongues; but in officiating, the Priest must do all in *Latin*, that the poor people may be never the wiser for what is done. Therefore

3. We can by no means concur with the Church of *Rome* in this practice; because it is an horrible taking the name of God in vain, and so a direct violation of the third Commandment, which God will severely visit the breach of, upon those who are justly chargeable therewith; such sinners as those, whoever may escape, God will not let go unpunished, or lightly punished; he will not hold them guiltless.

And

And is it possible more grossly to take the name of God in vain, than by praying to him in words, which we know not the meaning of? it seems to be downright mocking the supreme majesty.

Some of their Priests have been so wicked, as to curse or taunt the people, while they have pretended to be praying for them: the story of a certain Cardinal is well known, who, riding through the City of *Paris*, pretended to give the people his blessing, which they greedily received with the utmost appearance of devotion, but it was in *Latin*; and all the insolent Priest said, was only these words, *si populus vult decipi, decipiatur*, if the people will be deceived, let them be deceived.

This comes of praying and blessing in an unknown tongue: for want of a little *Latin*, a man may say *Amen* to a heavy curse, or a bitter jeer upon himself; and no wonder that they, who affront God, should in the grossest manner abuse their fellow creatures.

4. Prayer is no prayer, unless the heart go along with our words; but how can my heart join with another in a prayer, the words whereof I do not understand, no, nor perhaps he neither?

Prayer must be the expression of the desires of our hearts, the pouring out of our souls unto God; but there can be no such thing

thing in the publick worship of the Papists on the part of the poor people, who know not what is said.

Such may seem to draw near to God with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, but their heart is far from him, and therefore they are vain worshippers, *Matt.* xv. 8, 9.

Were there no instance of like kind to be produced, this one were sufficient to prove the Romish to be a dead, yea a deadly religion, dishonouring the divine majesty, and pernicious to the souls of men.

5. This manner of worship establisheth ignorance among the poor people, and is therefore a certain mark of a false religion. Ignorance is cried up by the Papists, as the mother of devotion; but it is the gate to perdition: that the soul be without knowledge, is not good, *Prov.* xix. 20. Jesus Christ calls himself the light, and the true light, *John* viii. 12, and Chap. i. 9. they that walk on in darkness know not at what they stumble, *Prov.* iv. 19. and they who hate the light, do it, because their deeds are evil, and they have no design of making them better, *John* iii. 19, 20.

The great end of religion is to enlarge the mind, to purifie the heart, to reform the life; to beget in us a conformity to God, and then to nourish in us a confidence in him, through

through Jesus Christ for happiness in both worlds.

But can such ends as these be secured and promoted by worshipping, we know not what, we care not how? by locking up the sacred Oracles of truth? By muttering unknown words like a charm? By reciting our Creed and our prayers no otherwise, than as a Parrot might be taught to do?

Surely God has long and sorely been angry with the christian world, or he would not have suffered such doctrines to have got footing, and kept their hold in it through so many ages.

These are strong delusions which threaten ruin in this world, and damnation in the next, to those who are judicially given up to them.

If we are not *Infidels*, we shall prefer gallies and dungeons, gibbets and flames to a blind devotion, and an implicit faith.

May God in mercy disappoint all designs to enforce them on us!

6. Prayer in an unknown tongue, cannot be the prayer of faith; and therefore cannot be available to procure from God the blessings we ought to desire, and do stand in need of.

Faith in prayer supposeth the actual knowledge of what we pray for; how else can we tell, whether God graciously hears our prayers,

prayers, so as to answer them or not? such must be in continual suspense, and therefore may not look to receive any thing of the Lord, *James i. 17.*

They are like *Baal's* worshippers; they may cry and cut themselves from morning till noon, but there will be neither voice, nor any that answereth, *1 Kings xviii. 26.*

It would fill one with grief and pity, as well as just indignation, to consider a company of well meaning, but misled people, devoutly worshipping a forbidden object, or a lawful one in a forbidden manner: either praying to a stock, or offering to the living God a worship, that is fit to be presented to none, but a dumb or dead Idol.

7. Let it further be noted, that our prayers are not designed to make any change in the immutable God, but to alter our own temper and disposition for the better; that we may be capable of receiving and improving the divine blessings and benefits. But can this be effected by empty sounds, words that we understand not?

Can the saying or hearing of *Latin* prayers make a man, who knows nothing of that language, more humble, more serious, more resigned to God, more heavenly minded, more stedfast in the belief of the providence of God, and in his reliance on the merits and

mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ? Reason will tell us the contrary, and the experience of all ages will confirm it, that the mind must be inlightned, before the heart can be to good purpose changed, the spirit of devotion wrought in us, and the happy effects of it comfortably perceived by us. Again

8. If they, that had the gift of speaking with strange tongues in a miraculous manner, were by divine appointment restrained in the use of that gift in publick worship, and not suffered to employ it in a manner inconsistent with, or opposite to edification; sure no Church can have authority to control the divine ordinance herein, or establish a contrary practice. What the Church of *Rome* has done, and continues to do with respect hereto, is flat usurpation, and flying in the face of God, and his inspired Apostle: read but the first *Cor.* 14. and see if the reasons there used will not be of equal force as long as time shall last; and we know that God has the same right in every age to prescribe after what manner he will be worshipped by us. *Latin* service is one of the grossest violations of the second, as well as the third Commandments: but I can only hint at the heads of things, my designed brevity, not allowing me to enlarge on particulars.

9. Prayers

9. Prayer in an unknown tongue lets in the utmost confusion and disorder into the publick worship of God; and so violates another known Apostolick Canon, 1 Cor. xiv. 40. *Let all things be done decently, and in order.*

What order can there be in that worship, where he that hears knows not what he that speaks is saying? and therefore, though the prayer, for the matter of it, be never so good, cannot join in it, cannot say *Amen* to it.

He that leads, and is the mouth of the rest in prayer, in solemn worshipping, ought to endeavour so to order his expressions, and the matter and method of his requests to God, that all who hear may understand; that they may go along with him in every confession, petition and thanksgiving; that even the unlearned may say *Amen* with knowledge and in faith: but when instead of this, the Priest prays in *Latin*, the people must necessarily gaze, and stare and be confounded, but cannot at all be advantaged.

If they will worship God at all, their's must be private worship: they must be offering their private ejaculations, when the other is presenting their common requests; which is the greatest confusion, and disorder imaginable.

10. Many of the more learned and moderate Papists have freely declared their dislike

like of this practice, but without any success; for the Council of *Trent* has fixed matters on an irrevocable foot, and made all the erroneous doctrines and false worship of that Church, like the laws of the *Medes* and *Persians*, which alter not: infallibility clincheth the nail and leaves no room for yielding, though a doctrine be ever so false, or a practice ever so absurd.

A *Cajetane*, a *Lyra*, or even an *Aquinas*, may say it were better the ancient rule were kept to, and that people might understand the publick offices, it is all to no purpose; to yield one point (though never so plain, and in it self never so small) would be a blow at infallibility, and that at the authority of the Pope; and take away that foundation, and their whole *Babel* falls to the ground.

Which makes me wonder at any who talk of comprimising matters between us and the Church of *Rome*; you may as soon reconcile fire and water, light and darkness, or mingle Heaven, Earth and Sea, as reconcile Protestantism and Popery, or make them subsist together.

We have no remedy left but patience and faith in the divine promises, which should be earnestly pleaded by us with God in prayer, for the speedy downfall of *Babylon*.

11. We have no instance in Scripture of publick prayers put up in an unknown tongue; all the prayers there recorded, were uttered in a language understood by every one that heard, and the very light of nature will teach us, that so it ought to be.

But *Rome* glories in a tyrannical triumph over the faith, reason and common sense of mankind. When, O blessed God, wilt thou appear in a cause, wherein the honour of thy name, and the souls which thou hast redeemed, and the dignity of that nature, which thou hast made after thine own Image, are so nearly concerned?

Yet the Papists have advocates, who think they can vindicate all this; and if they can, they never need fear being over matched in a controversy.

But alas, they do but shuffle, and after all trust more to the force of the secular arm, than to the arguments of their most learned Doctors.

1. *Bellarmino* thinks to take off the force of all that we object from, 1 *Cor.* 14. By telling us that the Apostle there only regulates the use of extraordinary miraculous gifts in that particular Church; but makes no binding law for the universal Church in all ages.

Ans. But this is *gratis dictum*: meer begging of the question. The arguments the

Apostle useth reach our case as well as theirs; and there can be no reason given, why a Christian should not know what he is to say *Amen* to now, as well as then.

2. He further saith, that the Apostle does not absolutely condemn prayer in an unknown tongue, though he prefers the other as better.

Ans. But this is a poor shift; if prayer in a known tongue be better, why do they not make use of it? have they never read that of the Prophet *Mal. i. 14. Cursed be the deceiver, which bath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing*: sure God is worthy to be served with the best we have, and in the best manner we can.

3. They plead that there is no such need of men's being instructed and edified now, as there was then; christianity was new in the world, and had but a few friends and abettors; but now it is become the general profession in many large Countries, it is secured by laws, and it is enough for the common people to believe and pray as they are taught, and there is no need of seeing and knowing for themselves, since they are under the conduct of an infallible guide.

Ans. Were all this true, it makes little for the defence of praying in an unknown tongue: but have not men reasonable souls now as well

well as ever? And must not every one of us give an account of himself to God? Can I see my way to Heaven with another man's eyes? if I drop into hell by following blind guides, will the Pope be damned for me? Will he not have enough of it to bear his own damnation? Why did God give us Bibles, if we may not read them, nor hear them read in a language we understand? If we may neither know what God says to us, nor what we say to him, we are in a sad condition indeed.

Lastly, let us consider what unspeakable mischiefs follow men's praying in an unknown tongue: it makes them lazy and heartless in their devotions; it renders them grossly ignorant and brutish, and fit to be practised on, and subjected to crafty Priests, who, if they can but make themselves masters of their persons and estates, care not what becomes of their souls; and makes them swallow contentedly those forms of devotion, which perhaps they would startle at, if they knew their meaning.

Use 1. Be thankful to God for the light of the Gospel, and the purity of our Protestant reformation: may this glory never depart from us, but still dwell in our land!

2. Let the zeal of Papists in their blind worship excite us to constancy and fervency

in our praying to God, as he himself hath directed us.

3. Look well to the manner, as well as to the matter of our prayers. What difference between a prayer eaten up with voluntary distraction, and a prayer in an unknown Tongue? there is no more faith or true fervour in the one than in the other, and therefore no better effect can be hoped for from it.

4. Let us see to it, that we pray with the understanding, pray in faith, persevere in prayer, and live our prayers, and then God will hear us, and we may hope our enemies shall not (at least finally) prevail against us.





DISCOURSE XVIII.

Against the Doctrine of Indulgences.

HEB. X. 14.

*For by one Offering he hath perfected
for ever them that are sanctified.*

THE doctrine of Justification by Jesus Christ (which is the sum of the Gospel) is most dangerously corrupted by the Papists, in all the main branches of it.

The offices of Christ, as Redeemer, are the foundation of all our hopes of finding mercy with God. By the execution of them we are justified, sanctified and glorified.

The Priestly office of Christ hath special relation to the remission of our sins, without which we are in no capacity of receiving the
sanctify

sanctifying spirit, or being admitted into the mansions of glory.

This Article therefore the Papists have many ways corrupted (as we have already shewn you) but there is no instance more gross than their doctrine of Indulgences, and the wicked practices consequent thereupon.

Christ died for our sins, and by one offering has perfectly acquitted all that believe on him, having freed them both from the fault and punishment; that the one shall not be remembred against them, nor the other inflicted on them.

But the Church of *Rome* has quite overturn'd the foundations, and as much as in her lies confounds the whole method of our salvation; and instead of the merits of Christ teacheth us to trust in our own good works, and the merits of other Saints; and pretends to deliver out pardons to the rich for ready money, and (like a hard-hearted step-mother as she is) leaves her poor children to shift for themselves as well as they can; Purgatory, or even Hell it self, being (according to her) good enough for them that have nothing to pay.

The point we shall speak to at present is, that Christ having perfected by one offering his Saints, there is no room for indulgences, nor any benefit by them.

They.

They are a fiction, a cheat, highly dishonourable to God and the Redeemer; ruinous and mischievous to the souls, and even to the outward estate of men.

I shall briefly open this matter in the following particulars.

1. The Papists assert a superfluity of merit in Christ, capable of being treasured up and applied (by the Pope forsooth) to the necessities of particular sinners.

That our Lord Jesus Christ has fully satisfied for our sins we assert: that his merits shall be effectually applied to all true penitent believers, we nothing doubt.

But of superfluous merits of his to make a Treasury, of which the Pope has the Key, which therefore he may dispense at pleasure, and sell for money, we read nothing in the Scriptures of truth, and therefore believe nothing at all.

To confirm this wicked fancy of theirs, they tell us, that one drop of Christ's blood was enough to redeem the world and satisfy for all the sins of men.

But where they learn'd this new doctrine, I cannot tell; Christ and his Apostles say nothing of it. Do they not seem hereby to charge God foolishly, as if he exacted more of his only begotten son than was due, and punished him with a needless severity? what need of the last drop of Christ's blood if the first alone was sufficient? God

God does not exact of the damned greater degrees of punishment than their sins have deserved ; and would he put his dearly beloved son to exquisite torments, to a bitter, bloody, painful, accursed death on no necessity ?

Such a procedure cannot be reconciled to the strict justice, much less to the immense goodness of the ever blessed God.

By this assertion they take away the necessity of Christ's death, which yet the Scripture every where asserts, and the event has fully declared.

This notion of theirs highly favours the Socinian tenets, and denies the necessity of Christ's satisfaction ; for if God might consistently with his Attributes, Law and Government, have pardoned the sins of all mankind for Christ's shedding one drop of his blood, why might he not have pardon'd them without any satisfaction at all ? which would open a wide door, not only to Socinianism, but even to Deism it self.

It obscures the love of God to his only begotten son, who would punish him so severely, and with so much rigour, when so much less would have serv'd turn.

And by lessening the love of God to his son, they lessen his love to mankind ; since the great evidence of his love to us is drawn from the immensity of that love he bore

bore to him, which notwithstanding, he would not spare him that he might spare us, but deliver him up for us all, *John* iii. 16.

This doctrine of theirs reflects also on the divine wisdom; for how can it be consistent with that, to be prodigal of his son's blood, and redeem us at so great a price, when so much less would have sufficed?

It tends also to lessen our sense of the guilt and malignity of sin, and that just horror we ought always to bear in our minds of so deadly an evil, which we could not be redeemed from, but by the bloody death of the son of God: besides the punishment threatened to our sins was death; and therefore he who undertook to be our surety must die, or we could not be discharg'd.

It is true, eternal death he was not capable of, and had he undergone it, he could not have redeemed us, for he must overcome, or we must perish; but the extremity of what he could undergo he underwent; and the union of his humane nature to the divine gave his sufferings a sufficiency of merit, and by the eternal spirit (his divine nature) he rose from the dead, conquering sin, death and hell, and so received his own, and procured our discharge.

And though his death were sufficient to discharge the debt of all mankind, and to redeem, not only this, but numberless more
worlds

worlds of sinners, were there such; yet was there nothing superfluous in the merit of his death, nor any part thereof left unapplied, so as to go into a treasury, out of which the Pope might take at pleasure, and apply to whom, when, and on what terms he should think good.

The whole of Christ's satisfaction is applied to every believer, not one part to this man, and another to that; so that every true believer receives whole Christ to his justification and salvation.

The satisfaction of Christ being perfect, and of a moral spiritual nature, is indivisible; and therefore cannot in part be communicated to this or the other believer, and the rest be laid up as in a Treasury like gold and silver: let never so much be applied, there is still no less remaining, for the use and benefit of those who shall believe on Christ to the end of the world.

2. They assert, That the satisfaction of Christ sufficeth for the forgiveness of the fault and of the eternal punishment of sin; but the superfluity of his satisfaction (or what is over and above, and lies treasur'd up in the Pope's coffers) is necessary to redeem us from the temporal punishment of sins, whether in this life or in Purgatory.

But we have before confuted their distinction between Fault and Punishment with respect

spect to pardon; and also their shameless fiction of Purgatory, and their notion of venial and mortal sin; and therefore those props being taken away, their doctrine of Indulgences must needs sink and fall to the ground.

The satisfaction of Christ is so perfect, that it is every way sufficient to its appointed ends; and there can be no excess or defect in it, no overplus to make up a treasury for the Church, nor any want of what is every way sufficient to redeem all that believe on him from the miseries they were fallen into by sin.

3. The Papists (not content with any overplus of Christ's merits to be put into the Church's treasury, as if they were afraid of some defect therein) add the merits of Saints and Martyrs, which must be thrown into the Bank to make a common stock, out of which the Pope may give forth to his votaries at his own discretion.

But this is monstrously absurd: they first assert a superfluity in the satisfaction of for Christ, and then they tell us we must satisfy our selves; and then they add, that the saints and martyrs must satisfy for us, and their merits must be sold us out, retailed to us (by pounds, ounces, and drams, sure) at a certain rate, and you must be sure your coin be good, and paid down upon the nail, and that
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there be good store of it, or else all those merits will avail you nothing: horrid juggling! wretched blasphemy! These huxters outdo *Simon Magus* himself, to whom *Peter* replied with so just and vehement indignation, *Thy money perish with thee*, Acts viii. 20.

4. They make the actions and passions of the saints to be satisfactory, contrary to Scripture, to the reason of the thing, and the nature of Christ's meritorious satisfaction.

The sufferings of believers are paternal chastisements for their amendment, and the warning of others, and deterring them from those sins, which God so severely animadverts on in his own best children: but neither their doings nor sufferings have any proper merit in them, nor can in the least make amends for what they have done amiss, their goodness does not thus extend unto God, *Psal. xvi. 2.* much less can they over do it, and have to spare for others (as we shewed you, when we treated of works of supererogation.)

The sufferings of the faithful are for the trial and confirmation of their graces, that their patience may have its perfect work, that the strength of divine grace may be manifested and magnified in them; that their victory over the powers of darkness, may be more illustrious and compleat; nay they are singular gifts and favours, and notices of God's good will towards them, *Phil. i. 22.*
but

but surely nothing can be gathered from this of their being a compensation for their sins, or a stock for others (that have been slothful and negligent) to live upon.

5. Their doctrine overthrows the satisfaction of Christ: if God require man, notwithstanding all that Christ has done and suffered, still to satisfy for the temporal punishment of their own sins, then Christ has not fully satisfied, or God the Father has not fully accepted that satisfaction; either of which to assert, were horrid blasphemy.

What saith *Bellarmino* to this? why truly that Christ has satisfied for our sins, with respect to temporal punishment, not immediately but mediately, in that he affords us grace whereby to satisfy for our selves: a shameful subterfuge! this is asserting Christ's satisfaction in words, but denying it in reality.

If Christ has fully satisfied, what need of my satisfying? If I must still satisfy, how has he fully satisfied? Besides, the Father and the Holy Ghost give us grace to do good works, and glorify God by patient bearing afflictive trials; but no man in his wits will thence infer, that the Father and the Holy Spirit has satisfied for us.

Besides, this notion is inconsistent with their doctrine and practice about indulgences; for their indulgences are to release those that obtain them from satisfying in their own persons,

sons, by applying to them the overplus of the merits of Christ, and the Saints, not to enable them to satisfy for themselves. Further, if Christ satisfied immediately, for the eternal punishment due to sin, Why not for the temporal also? Or can the vertue of his satisfaction be divided, so as to be available for the one, without being so likewise for the other?

But they urge, that our satisfactions are to apply Christ's satisfaction to us: most absurd! for faith applies the whole satisfaction of Christ to every one that believes, and no one ever heard of one satisfaction applied by another; for then another must apply that, and so on *in infinitum*.

6. The Papists know not what use the Churches treasury of superfluous merits and satisfactions is good for, which is a great prejudice against them, and their cause.

They deny that it can expiate deadly sin: they are not agreed, whether it can take away the guilt, or fault, even of venial sins: it satisfies not for eternal punishment: what then in the name of goodness is it good for? It cannot satisfy for natural punishment, nor for that which is inflicted in civil or spiritual Courts: what then does it satisfy for? Why truly for that punishment which the Priest enjoins in the Sacrament of penance, which must be performed by us, or we must

must satisfy for it in Purgatory, or else we must be beholden to the Pope for an indulgence, which will cost us a good round sum of money: a notable trick to fill the Pope's coffers and keep the people in ignorance, poverty, slavery, horror of conscience, and perpetual danger of damnation.

Bellarmino himself owns that Scripture cannot be pleaded for this doctrine, or the practice which is grounded on it: reason reclaims and remonstrates against it, with the utmost force and evidence, declaring it foolish and absurd: it has no prop, but the authority of men, who find their interest in it, and who are wicked enough to damn themselves, and multitudes of people besides, that they may be rich and great in this world, and go to Hell merrily.

7. They assert that the power of granting indulgences belongs to Priests, but principally to the Pope, in whom, as Christ's vicar, all Church power on earth centers. And for this they cite *Matt. xviii. 18. Whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in Heaven,* and *John xx. 23. Whosoever sins ye forgive, they shall be forgiven.*

Here they say Christ has given to Priests, especially the Pope, power to loose all bonds, by which men may be hindred from obtaining

eternal salvation; and those bonds they reckon to be faults, punishments, censures, laws, vows, oaths; all which the Pope and his Priests, may bind or loose at pleasure.

A devilish doctrine! which has thrown the world a heaps age after age, and filled the earth with slaughter, bloodshed, and confusion.

And a doctrine which has no manner of foundation in the texts they bring for it. Christ has not given the power out of his own hands, into those of a Priest.

If the keys err the absolution is void, it being only ministerial and declarative.

God has promised pardon to them that repent and believe, but the Pope will not grant it, till he be well paid. What horrible simony and perversion of the keys is here? What a snare to the souls of deluded Papists? What a scandal to Protestants, whom they call *Hereticks*; as also to *Jews*, *Mahometans* and *Pagans*!

It was the scandal of those indulgences that gave birth to *Luther's* reformation, and will one day hasten the utter ruin and downfall of the papal kingdom, which all good men pray that it may, and hope that it is near: sure however it is; and we must be content to wait God's time for it, with faith and patience.

8. Can it seem credible that the Gospel should give the Pope a power of dispensing the Churches treasury, arising from the overplus of the merits of Saints, for the remission of temporal punishment; when there is not the least mention of any such treasury, nor of any remission of penalties where the fault is retained, nor so much as of the Pope (unless under the characters of Anti-christ, a deceiver, that wicked one, the man of sin, and the son of perdition) in the whole new Testament?

Methinks a matter of this importance should have been recorded there, with the utmost clearness and certainty, if there had been indeed any such thing; but in this (as in the matter of infallibility and supremacy) they quote texts, in which no body can find any thing to their purpose, but themselves.

9. Indulgences (as now dispensed in the papacy) owe their rise to an abuse of the ancient discipline of the Church in the early ages of Christianity. *Hereticks, Apostates*, men of loose and vicious conversations were excluded the communion of their fellow Christians, and this was esteemed a sore and grievous penalty; (*præjudicium ultimi judicij*, as *Tertullian* calls it) to be cast out of the communion of the Church was by them resented as a strong intimation, that they

should be finally condemned at the bar of Christ, and cast forth into outer darkness, where there is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth, *Matt. viii. 12.* This penalty was not inflicted for trifling matters, but when once any one fell under it, he was not suddenly or lightly released from it; he wept, he prostrated himself, he begg'd the prayers of the faithful, and implor'd the compassion of the pastors of the Church, and that perhaps many years: this severity made many ready to sink under their burden, and therefore methods of mitigation were found out, and yielded to; the time or the degree of their penance was shorten'd, recommendations were given from Martyr's Confessors, or persons of eminent piety, on whose account abatements were made of the degree, or duration of penance.

After that came in commutations, or the exchanging of a higher, for a lower degree of penance, which they call satisfaction, not to God, but to the Church; and from this they proceed to indulgence, wholly waving the appointed penalty, and resting satisfied with the serious profession of repentance and amendment of life.

And in after times the Popes took the power to themselves of those indulgences, and brought them to the scandalous pass they are

are now at, in the papal part of what is called the christian world, to the ruin of true discipline, the scandal of beholders, and the destruction of the souls for whom Christ died.

10. It is the utmost length of wickedness in the doctrine and practice of indulgences in the Church of *Rome*, that they are granted to men before-hand ; not only a remission of sins past, but an assurance of forgiveness for the sins they shall commit hereafter.

This is such a prostituting of all that's sacred ; such a contempt of the divine law and Gospel ; such a hardening and emboldening men in sin, as none but the mother of Harlots and abominations could be guilty of.

By this the Roman territories are become a *Sodom* and an *Aeldama*.

Suppose I had a mind to an act of lust or revenge, though never so filthy and cruel ; I know the price, it is but down with your dust, and you have an indulgence, and the business is done ; you may kill a man, or debauch a woman, and be in no fear or trouble about the matter ; you have your pardon in your pocket, sin on and welcome.

How long, Lord God, holy and true, wilt thou not drive these buyers and sellers out of thy temple, and avenge on them the blood of murder'd souls and bodies !

U 4.

Use 1.

Use 1. Prize the satisfaction of Christ, that blood of his, which only can, and does cleanse from all sin.

2. Repent of sin, hate it, flee from it, and you will need, nor desire no papal indulgences.

3. Submit to afflictions patiently, but sink not under them, as if they were always judicial; they are often the fruits and evidences of God's fatherly love.

4. Be religious out of judgment and choice, and for the ends of religion, the pleasing of God, and the saving of your souls; and then you will slight and hate the impostures of the Church of *Rome* in this, and all other instances.





DISCOURSE XIX.

Of the Celebacy of the Clergy.

HE B. xiii. 4.

Marriage is honourable in all.



OD having made man, male and female, instituted marriage in Paradise; so that it is an holy and honourable state, and may lawfully be entered into by men of all ranks and orders.

There is no moral defilement necessarily adhering to the married, more than to the single state; and therefore to forbid it to a whole order of men, or to those who have intangled themselves unnecessarily by rash and inconsiderate vows (as the Papists do) is to sin against the very light of nature, and the exprefs direction and appointment of God in the Holy Scriptures.

To make out this is the designed business of the present exercise.

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I. The Papists, by Clergy, understand all and only Ecclesiastical persons, Bishops, Priests and Deacons, as distinguish'd from Laicks and Seculars, though the Scripture seems not to countenance that distinction (as they intend it) but calls even the Laity God's Clergy, *1 Pet. v. 3.*

Yet I doubt not but Ministers under the Gospel are a distinct Order and Office, separated to be over the people in the Lord, for their instruction, edification and salvation, and are obliged to greater degrees of holiness and purity, than is ordinarily obtained by or expected from others: they are in a peculiar sense the lights of the world, and the salt of the world, *Matt. v. 13, 14.*

II. To all of the ministerial (or as they love rather to speak, priestly) character, the Papists do absolutely forbid marriage, and reckon it a great profanation in them to be joined to a wife.

Their end in this is to blind the people, and make them think more highly of ministers than they ought to think; even to become their slaves, and follow them with an unreserv'd obedience whithersoever they think fit to lead them, and especially to secure an absolute unlimited obedience to the Pope, both from Clergy and Laity.

To serve this politick design, they care not what hardships, nor what temptations they plunge

plunge a whole order of men into. Miserable snares and torments must they be in, who cannot contain, and may not marry: their good designs of serving Christ in the Gospel of his son are hereby frustrated; all the doors of preferment are barred against them, if they will be honest; and if they will, for worldly ends, juggle with God and their own consciences, they often become the impurest wretches upon the face of the whole earth.

III. The *Trent* Council expressly forbids marriage to all that are in the greater orders (*i. e.* as I understand them, to all Bishops, Priests and Deacons) but as to the reasons of this so strict and severe injunction, they greatly differ among themselves; some of them assert, that the duties of the conjugal relation are inconsistent with the purity that becomes men in holy orders, and that there is something of intrinsic moral pollution in the conversation of a man with a woman, though within the bounds of holy marriage, that unfits him for sacred offices.

And on this head they expatiate in the language of our modern Rakes and Libertines, and do all they can to throw dirt on the wise and gracious appointment of the holy God.

They stick not to apply what the Apostle says of such as are in their natural unregenerate

rate state, and who are under the dominion of sensuality, to this divine ordinance, *Rom. viii. 8. They that are in the flesh cannot please God.* Which, what is it but to burlesque the Scriptures, and treat an ordinance of God with the utmost and most open contempt? some of them have said, that if a Priest be guilty of fornication, or keep a whore, it is a far less crime than for him to marry.

They do not allow a Presbyter to be depos'd for fornication; but if he marry, he must no longer be a Priest, nor do any act of his function.

Others lay all the stress of the prohibition of marriage to Priests, on the vow of Celibacy which they make at their Ordination, and on the Churches interdict, which some indeed will have to be of divine, others only of human and positive right.

Some say the Pope himself cannot dispense with this Ecclesiastical constitution; others say, he may do it, but it is not expedient he should.

IV. In opposition to these gross and absurd tenets of the Papists, the Protestants hold that marriage, consider'd abstractly and in its general nature, comes into the clause of things indifferent, which is not in, and of it self morally good or evil, or makes a man godly or ungodly; but it's conducive-

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ness to the one, or the other, is to be judged of by every one for himself; and that state is to be chosen and preferred by us, which may contribute most to his main end, all circumstances duly noticed and consider'd. That may be a blessing to one, which may be a snare to another: the same thing may help one in his way to Heaven, and hasten another to Hell and destruction.

Therefore it is not a light matter, but of the greatest importance; yet it is not absolutely, or in it self necessary or hurtful, but may be the former to the one, the latter to another, and so many consequences depend upon it, that it cannot be absolutely indifferent to any individual, while at the same time it is so in general to the whole species.

V. Hence we conclude, that no Ecclesiastical Law can rightfully be made concerning marriage, or Celibacy, by which any whole order of men shall be bound to the use of marriage, or to abstinence from it.

You may as well shape a coat for the moon, or fit a shooe to every foot, as make any such rule, law, or constitution, as shall equally oblige all, even all of any one sort, rank, or order of men, to the married, or single state of life.

God has form'd our bodies of vastly different constitutions, and from the meer result of

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natural constitution, that state of life may become necessary to one, which would be hurtful to another: And must men that never saw us, nor ever heard any thing of us, determine for us in which of these states we shall pass our lives?

If I can better discharge the duties of that station wherein God has placed me, in the Church, or in civil society, in a single state than in a married one, I ought to chuse it: but if all circumstances consider'd, my very being in a single state would hinder me serving God and the publick as I ought to do; I then ought, out of conscience to God, to marry, even though I thereby expose my self to some worldly and outward troubles and inconveniences, and trust him to provide for me.

And if a Pope or a Council will deny me this liberty which God has granted me, they usurp his throne, and declare themselves Rebels against him.

VI. We therefore conclude upon the whole, that Ministers may lawfully marry, and are not to be prohibited or restrain'd from so doing, by any humane law, civil or ecclesiastical, that shall universally at all times oblige those of that order: Or thus, marriage is equally lawful in its own nature, to Ministers as to the rest of mankind.

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And I think this assertion will be clearly and fully proved by the following arguments or considerations, *viz.*

1. That of my Text, *Marriage is honourable in all*; if in all, then in Clergy-men as well as Lay-men, Ministers as well as people.

What is honourable in all ought not to be forbidden to any particular order of men; nor what God has cleansed and sanctified, to be counted or called common or unclean, *Acts x. 14, 15*. How should that be a reproach to a Minister, which God has made and declared honourable in all?

How should a Sacrament (for such the Papists hold marriage to be) make the people holy, and that *ex opere operato*, and defile the Minister, and render him polluted and unclean? but they can digest the grossest absurdities and contradictions, provided they do but strengthen the Anti-christian tyranny, and bring grist to the Pope's mills.

The Papists say, the Apostle speaks here of things, not of persons; but his scope plainly shews that he speaks of persons; for he opposeth those in whom marriage is honourable, to those whoremongers and adulterers whom God will judge.

2. The Apostle expressly enjoins, that they who cannot contain should marry, without any intimation of any reserved case, or exclusion of Ministers more than others, from the ob-

observance of this rule, 1 Cor. vii. 2. *Nevertheless to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.* And again verse 9. if they cannot contain, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.

Here it is plain, that such as cannot contain, not only may, but ought to marry; and the Apostle makes no exception of any sort of persons, but useth an universal particle, every man: and again, if they, (whoever they be, Bishops, Priests, Deacons, as well as others) if they cannot contain, let them marry, and the reason holds as to them no less, but in some respects even more than as to others; it is better to marry than to burn. The burnings of lust are dangerous and scandalous in any man, much more in a Minister. If then God has provided a remedy, and his case so require, he ought to take it and make use of it with thankfulness to God, and his character is not at all lessened hereby; nor will he be despised for it, by wise, capable, equal and impartial judges.

3. The forbidding to marry is censur'd by the Apostle, as the character of the Apostacy of the later times, and is called a doctrine of devils, 1 Tim. iv. 1, 2, 3.

One would think this were enough to make us stop our ears against all the specious pretences of the Church of Rome, where-
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with they would colour their impiety in this matter.

They will have it, that they consult the purity and honour of the Gospel-ministry in forbidding Ministers to marry; but God has declared himself of another mind; and then it cannot be a doubt whom we should hearken to.

But the Papists say, the Apostle here warns us only against those who condemn marriage it self as unlawful, and forbid it to all persons whatsoever; which is said to have been the error of some ancient hereticks.

But the contrary will be evident, if we consider that the Apostle is speaking of the errors of the last times, and therefore could not immediately respect such errors as sprang up in the first ages of Christianity: besides, he speaks of authoritative forbidding to marry, which the ancient Hereticks pretended not to, but the Pope only arrogates to himself; they only taught not to marry; but he commands and punisheth (and that very severely) those who despise his authority herein: further, the ancient Hereticks taught their errors openly and barefac'd; but the Romanists speak their lies in hypocrisy, and seek colours for their wicked opinions, that they may more easily deceive, and therefore it is of them that the Apostle is here to be understood.

4. The practice of the Primitive Church in this matter is decisive in favour of the Protestant cause. *Peter, James and John* were all married men, *Matt. viii. 14. 1 Cor. iv. 5.* So was *Philip* the Evangelist, *Acts xxviii. 8. 9.*

The Apostle *Paul* (though a single man) asserts his right to lead about a sister, a wife (*i. e.* as I understand it a Christian wife) as well as the other Apostles in the forecited, *1 Cor. 9. 5.* and if an Apostle might be married, there can be no reason assigned why an ordinary Minister may not; and though the word *γυνή* signifies a woman in general, as well as a wife, yet the scope and strength of the Apostle's argument restrains it in that place, to the sense our Translators have given it in.

The leading about a wife would have been a charge to the Churches, whereas the having women of wealth, who would have helped to bear his charges in his travels, would rather have been a help to them; which shews, that cannot be the sense which the Papists would fasten upon the words to serve their hypothesis, for which they quote *Luke viii. 1, 2.* Besides, the Apostle plainly speaks of a single person whom it was lawful for him to lead about, which it could not have been reputable, if honest, for him to have done, unless she had been his wife.

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To take off the force of this arguing, the Papists have a notable fetch from *Matt. xix. 27.* where *Peter* saith to our saviour, we have forsaken all; therefore say they, the Apostles left their wives that they might follow Christ: but this is not to argue from the Scriptures, but to ridicule them: they left all that was an unavoidable hindrance of following him; but so are not always the necessary comforts of life, nor our valuable relations: when indeed they actually become so, they are to be left, (as life it self is) but not till then.

5. The Apostle, where he describeth the characters and qualifications of Ministers, expressly allows them the liberty of marriage, *1 Tim. iii. 2.* A Bishop, saith he, must be blameless, the husband of one wife. A Minister must not be a Polygamist, but, as in the 4th verse, he must rule well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. We must not suppose that the Apostle allow'd of Concubinage (though the Pope does) therefore the children, he was to have in subjection, must be those born in lawful wedlock.

But they have a rare device to expound away the argument from this text. A Bishop, say they, must be the husband of one wife, that is, he must have but one Church, he must be no pluralist; but this exposition is

plainly forced, and is contradicted by themselves in practice.

6. We may argue from the first institution of marriage, *Gen. i. 28.* where it is expressly said, that God blessed the new created pair, *Adam* and *Eve*, and said unto them be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth: no exception is made of any sort or profession of men, as prohibited from a share in the divine blessing.

And the natural desire of off-spring, that is in all men, may justly be esteemed a Law of nature, allowing, if not even binding them (where greater reasons to the contrary do not evidently intervene) to enter into the married state, that the Church and World sink not into ruin, and the earth become unpeopled, and a desolate wilderness.

Rash marriages bring many miseries; but that is to be imputed to the fall and the lusts of men: but where God is duly regarded, and sought to, our duty and comfort are at once secured in that happy state.

It is further to be consider'd, that in our fal'n state marriage is become necessary to many, on an account which would not have had any plea, had man continued innocent; namely to avoid fornication; and therefore to prohibit it now, is to contradict that will of God, which the Apostle declares to be our sanctification, that we should abstain from
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fornication, and know how to possess our vessel in sanctification and honour, 1 *Thes.* iv. 3, 4.

Nor yet does the law of marriage bind every one affirmatively that he must marry, but it secures every one from the unjust invasion of his liberty by any humane law that shall forbid marriage to him, whatever his circumstances are.

7. We may very well plead against the Popish doctrine in this matter, the mischievous consequences of such laws as theirs, which restrain a whole order of men from marrying.

It is a shame to mention the impurities and scandals which this wicked law, that Priests shall not be married, has occasion'd in the *Romish* Church, so that even one of their own Popes, *Pius* the 2d, could not forbear saying, that the liberty of marrying was with good reason taken away from the Clergy, but on better reason ought to be restored to them. Their own Bishops have confessed, that by being restrained from marriage, their Priests grew old in lust and filthiness.

The *German* Nation, in their famous *Centum Gravamina*, complain'd of this as an intollerable grievance.

The best families became subject to intollerable pollutions and rapines, by the lust

of Priests, who taught and committed filthiness at the very Altars and seats of Confession.

But I will not aggravate this upon them as it deserves, because I would spare your ears, and because the best among themselves have own'd the guilt, professed the shame it has brought upon their Church, and earnestly desired and pleaded for a Reformation herein.

8. If Continence, or the being able to live purely in a single state, be a peculiar gift of God, not common to all, nor particularly promised to any, the forbidding of marriage must be a doctrine of Devils; for it is in effect a bidding men whore and defile themselves, and so draw upon themselves a swift and severe damnation: For *If any man defile the temple of God, him will God destroy*, 1 Cor. iii. 17. Our Saviour saith expressly, *That all men cannot receive this saying*, Matt. xix. 11. viz. of making themselves Eunuchs, or living single for the kingdom of Heaven's sake. And the Apostle Paul tells us, 1 Cor. vii. 7. *That every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, another after that.*

Therefore no man is to be hindred by any human law from marrying: it may be fit to seek of God the gift; proper means may be used to obtain it; but if after all
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we have it not, God calls us to a more troublesome state of life, but more safe and comfortable for our selves; and we are bound (as his providence gives opportunity) to follow his call.

Bellarmino indeed is pleased to say, that none should be made Priests, but those who seem to have the gift of continency: but this is said without any warrant from scripture, reason or experience; and a man may seem to himself and others for a time to have the gift, who really has it not.

And a confident presumption, that he can do well enough without God's appointed remedy, may hurry him into eternal perdition.

I might add to what has been said, the opinions of Fathers and Councils in this matter; but it is needless to appeal to them, when we have reason, scripture and experience so evidently on our side.

What the Papists object against us in this matter, I shall at present pass over untouch'd; the truth has been so plainly establish'd, that every one may be able to answer what shall be said against it of himself.

And besides, I would not dwell too long upon a point, that ill-dispos'd minds would be apt to pervert to their own, if not to others hurt also.

And the very starting some of their objections would offend a chaste and pious ear: *May God enlighten us in the knowledge of his truth, and strengthen us in the ways of purity and holiness, and then we shall abhor the Popish doctrines and practices contrary to christian purity; we shall bless God that we are deliver'd from that accursed and intolerable yoke, that neither we nor our fathers were able to bear; we shall not think the worse of our Ministers for being married: and it is to be hoped God will give them wisdom and grace so to behave in the married state, that neither of God's Ordinances, their ministry or their marriage, may be justly blamed on their account,*



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DISCOURSE XX.

Of Assurance.

HEB. VI. II.

And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence, to the full assurance of hope unto the end.



THE Apostle is here pressing those Christian *Hebrews* to whom he writes, not to content themselves with uncertain conjectures about their spiritual and their future everlasting state.

A very needless and vain exhortation, if we believe the Papists; for what is absolutely impossible cannot be the matter of Counsel, or of a wise and just exhortation. I shall therefore endeavour at this time to shew, that assurance of our present good state, and future final happiness is attainable by true believers.

And,

1. Let me acquaint you how the Council of *Trent* (which is the standard of Popery and which all Papists own to be infallible being ratified, and they might have said directed too, by the Pope,) has stated this matter.

They tell us positively that no man can know by such a certainty of faith, as cannot deceive him, that he is in a state of grace and favour with God.

That no man ought to conclude positively, and without actual doubting, that he is truly justified.

And they pronounce him *Anathema*, who shall hold, or assert, that a justified man is bound to believe, that he is of the number of the predestinate.

And though their Authors differ about the sense of the Council in this point; yet the Jesuits (whose divinity prevails in the Romish Schools, and who bear it in their Church, as if all who differ from them were Hereticks) declare, that a believer may indeed hope well and conjecture from probable signs, that he is in a state of grace and shall be saved; yet no man may certainly conclude, or can know to such a degree, as may deserve the name of the assurance of hope (much less of faith) that he shall be saved.

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2. The *Arminians* do thus far agree with the *Papists*, that no man can be sure of his election in this life: for they assert that election it self is conditional, and that though a man know at present, that he has performed the conditions of salvation, yet he ought to doubt, whether he shall persevere.

And they tell us, that they who do otherwise, do but sow pillows under one anothers arms, and that this is the high rode to a fatal presumption and security.

That hereby a flood-gate is opened to impurity and sensuality, and all manner of careless behaviour and vicious conversation. In opposition therefore both to *Papists* and *Arminians* we assert.

3. That though our election cannot be known by us *a priori* (as the schools love to speak) yet *a posteriori* it may, and that with certain and conclusive evidence: we say indeed with the Apostle, *Rom. xi. 34. Who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his Counsellor?* We cannot ascend into Heaven to discover the causes of election, nor can we search the authentick rolls of the book of life: but we may and ought to descend into our selves, to search and see what is written in the book of our own consciences; and finding in our selves the fruits of election, we may know that there is a root from whence

whence they spring, and that the free election of God is that root, and that we do indeed belong to the election of grace.

And this assurance we arrive at in the way of a practical *Sillogism*, of the following tenour and import: he who truly believes and repents, is elect: I believe and repent, therefore I am elect. God has chosen me, and has enabled me to choose him as my God and guide and portion; and this I may be as truly assured of, as I can be that I am alive, when I observe that I breath, walk, think, speak, &c.

4. We deny not, but a man may be assured of his election and salvation by an immediate divine revelation, if God shall see fit to make any such to him.

That this has sometimes been really the case we doubt not; but that it is often so, we see no reason to believe: and hastning to give assent to supposed immediate revelations, has done no small hurt to the world, and to the Church also. How often have men of honest hearts but weak heads, been deceived this way? And men that are thus deceived themselves are usually more eager to proselyte, and so to deceive others also.

Nor do we dispute with them, concerning the certainty we may have of the election and salvation of another person, but of our selves: we must judge charitably of others; but

but such a conjectural certainty as that, will not serve a man that is seriously religious in his own case, but he would be able to say with the Apostle, *We know that we are of God*, 1 John v. 19.

5. Neither do the Protestants assert, that assurance is the actual attainment of all believers in this life; or that the best do attain such an absolute certainty as excludes, and that constantly, all manner of suspicion, fear, or doubt of the contrary: the faith of the best is liable to be assaulted with temptation: Earth is not Heaven; the strongest believers do not attain to such an assurance of Heaven, as actual possession gives the weakest as soon as they arrive there.

Godly persons and strong believers are sometimes in desertion, often under temptation, but their faith does not fail; and they have glimmerings of hope and comfort, when they are for a while deprived of that *Plerophory* and full assurance of faith, which they have sometimes enjoyed.

6. We are far from asserting (as our enemies charge us) that a man may be assured of his election, calling, perseverance, and salvation, while he indulgeth spiritual sloth, wallows in sensual impurities, neglects the appointed means of sanctification, confirmation and comfort: all such we pronounce to be presumptuous hypocrites, or at least to be
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in such a frame, as 'till they recover from, they cannot rightly conclude any thing of their election of God, or entertain any well grounded hope of their final salvation.

7. That therefore which we assert and maintain against the *Papists* and *Arminians*, is that an adult believer may (not by a continual and uninterrupted act, but by a fundamental right, and an abiding habit) be assured, not only for the present, that he is in a state of grace; but for the future, that he shall abide in it, and shall be finally saved: this I shall briefly confirm to you by the following arguments.

I. Believers may know that they are the adopted children of God, they may therefore know that they are elected of God, because faith and adoption are the certain fruits and tokens of our election from all eternity; this they may know, not only from the filial affection, which they bear to the blessed author of their being, but also from the witness of the spirit, who is given to assure them hereof, *Rom. viii. 15, 16. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, father. The spirit it self beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God.*

Believers may know that they believe, not only by the direct act of faith, while they

they are exerting it, as we know that we see or tast, or smell by our own inward sensation, while we are acting these senses on their proper objects; but also by a reflex act, whereby we call to mind what has past within us, and are enabled assuredly to know how it has been with us, *John vi. 69. We believe, and are sure (say the Disciples) that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* Or as others render those first words, we have known and believed that thou art, &c. So the father of the lunatick, *I believe, Lord help thou mine unbelief, Mark ix. 24.* & *John ii. 3. Hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.* So the Apostle Paul, *2 Tim. i. 12. I know whom I have believed.* Nor would the same Apostle have exhorted us in so solemn a manner, to examine our selves, whether we be in the faith, or whether Christ be in us, as he does, *2 Cor. xiii. 5.* If after our most diligent search and exploration, this could not be known by us: whence that saying of *Augustine de Trin. l. 13. c. 1. Whoever has true faith, may see it in his own heart, possessing it with the utmost certainty, and his conscience bearing him witness of it.*

Nor is it an objection of any weight against this great truth, that some boast of a faith, which they really have not; that many deceive themselves with vain hope, since the
boast.

boastings of Hypocrites, and the confidence of sincere believers differ as much, as the knowledge of men awake, and the idle dreams of those whose senses are lock'd up in a profound sleep.

II. Believers may know that they belong to God, by the writing of his law in their hearts: all God's children bear his Image; his law is the transcript of his nature, and they have it impressed daily and legibly in their own souls.

God has written their names in the book of life, but that book is as yet shut and sealed; they cannot look into it, but they can look into their Bibles, and consult the promises, which confirm the perseverance and coronation of the elect regenerate.

They can look each of them into the book of his own conscience, and there read God's holy law, *Written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in the fleshy tables of the heart,* 2 Cor. iii. 3. Hereby they have as it were a copy of the decree of election, with peculiar application to themselves; God writing his law and grace in our hearts, assures us of his everlasting love, and of his constant and abiding care about us, and custody of us, and that we shall be kept by his mighty power, *through faith unto salvation,* 1 Pet. i. 5.

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Jer. xxxi. 33. *I will put my law in their inward parts, and will write it in their hearts, and will be their God, and they shall be my people.*

Thus the Redeemer promiseth, Rev. ii. 17. *That he will give to him that overcometh the white stone, with the new name written thereon, which no man can read, but he which has it.*

The new name there spoken of is most certainly the name of the sons of God: this God so writes in the hearts of the faithful, that they are thereby assured of their adoption: though they are not known to others, they are to God and themselves, which could not be, if neither our election nor our adoption could with certainty be known by us.

The full accomplishment indeed of this promise will be in Heaven, but the beginnings and earnest of it, believers receive on earth, to their unspeakable support and consolation.

III. This may be known to believers by the witness, and sealing of the spirit of God, (this was hinted at before, but it deserves to be distinctly considered, as an argument enforcing the truth of our assertion) *The spirit not only witnesseth with our spirit, that we are the sons of God, as was before noted, from Rom. viii. 16. But he sealeth us unto the day of redemption, Eph. iv. 30.* Can his witness be false? or his seal put to a lye?

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Or if he witness, and seal, may not we know? A principal use of sealing is confirmation, that the thing sealed should be rendered certain, and indubitable to all those, who have any interest or concern in the matter; and though *Satan* do sometimes transform himself into an Angel of light, and some have boasted of the sealings of the spirit, and fallen into raptures and transports, which have been mere delusions; yet it will not hence follow, that the sealings of the spirit carry no certain or assuring evidence along with them: the real operations of the divine spirit are so sweet and powerful; they are accompanied with such an admirable splendor of divine light; they do so intirely captivate the soul to the obedience of faith; they fill the heart and conscience with such ineffable joy and comfort; that he must be blind, who cannot see their Author, and dead, who does not ascribe them to the living God. Remarkable to this purpose is that of the Apostle *John*, 1 John iii. 24. *Hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the spirit which he has given us: if we know that God abideth in us, we know that we shall abide in him, and may have an undoubted certainty of our salvation.* And to this effect, the Apostle *Paul* also speaks 1 Cor. ii. 12. *Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know*
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the things that are freely given to us of God.

Our gracious God does not think it enough to bestow upon us the things that are necessary to our salvation, but he would have us know that we have them to our comfort; and therefore he gives us his spirit, not only to work grace in us, but also to evidence it to us.

Nor can we say with any shew of reason (as a certain *Jesuit* does) that the Apostle here speaks of the blessings we shall partake of *in the state of glory*, and not of those conferred on us *here in time*: for it is most evident, that the Apostle here refers to both, and though we cannot fully conceive of these things at present, by reason of our natural infirmity, darkness and corruption; it doth not therefore follow that the spirit of God, cannot even now reveal them to us in such a manner, as shall fill our minds with light and knowledge, and our hearts with joy and consolation.

IV. Many of the saints of God have had and expressed a comfortable assurance of their being in Christ, being the adopted Children of God chosen to eternal life, and that they should be secured from falling, and obtain the Crown of endless glory.

Abraham the father of the faithful saw Christ's day and rejoiced, believed in hope

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against hope, staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; and being strong in faith, gave glory to God, John viii. 56. Rom. iv. 18, 19, 20. David was confident that he should be established and glorified, Psalm xvi. 8, 9, 10, 11. That goodness and mercy should follow him all the days of his life, and that he should dwell in the house of the Lord for ever, Psalm xxiii. 6. The Apostle Paul was stedfastly persuaded, That nothing should be able to separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Nor was their assurance the fruit of an extraordinary particular revelation, but attained in such ways, and by such means as are common to all the elect of God.

V. The effects and consequences of faith are expressed in Scripture, by such words as import assurance, or a full and satisfying certainty of our safe state God-ward, such as boldness and confidence, Eph. iii. 12. Full assurance, Heb. x. 22. Glorifying, Rom. v. 3. Joy unspeakable, 1 Pet. i. 8. Joy, which no man taketh from us, John xvi. 22.

Surely these expressions note something greater than a conjectural opinion, or such a loose persuasion of our interest in God and title to glory, as leaves us under sad perplexities, and has more of despair than of holy confidence accompanying it.

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If then, others of God's servants have attained to assurance by ordinary means, why may not we? Are not the promises of the Gospel the same to us as to them? Is not God as faithful as ever? Will he not give his holy spirit to us, if we ask it of him, with humility, faith and constant importunity?

Will not the same dispositions of mind be evidences to us of our integrity, and God's gracious acceptance, as were so to them?

Let us not therefore be slothful, but followers of them, who through faith and patience inherit the promises, and give all diligence to make our calling and election sure: for if we do these things we shall never fall, Heb. vi. 12. Phil. ii. 12. 2 Pet. i. 10.

To what has been said, the *Papists* and others object as follows.

1. *Eccl. ix. i. No Man knoweth love or hatred, by all that is before them: i. e.* Say they, no man can know assuredly in this life, that he is specially beloved of God.

But if you look into the context you will plainly see, that the wise man is not speaking of the love of God, as it may be known by his graces in us; but only as men would gather it from his providential dispensations towards us; as if all were beloved of God, who prospered in the World, or the contrary.

2. They object, that fear and trembling are often recommended to us in holy Scripture; which seems not to consist with that full assurance, boldness, joy and triumph, which we assert to be attainable, and that it ought to be the aim and endeavour of every Christian; and for this they quote *Prov. xxviii. 14. Happy is the man that feareth alway: Phil. ii. 12. Work out your own salvation, with fear and trembling: 1 Peter i. 17. Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.*

To which the answer is plain; those Scriptures call us to shake off carnal security; but they do not overturn the certainty of our election and justification: they enjoyn care and diligence about the means of obtaining salvation, not a doubtful suspense, concerning the event and issue.

In a word, it is not a servile and slavish, but a filial and ingenuous fear, that is enjoined us.

3. But have not many of God's servants expressed themselves in a very doubtful manner, concerning their salvation, and sometimes more like despairing persons, than assured saints; *David, Heman, Asaph,* and the Apostle *Paul* himself, crying out of in-dwelling corruption, and speaking, as if after all his labours and sufferings, *He should be himself a cast away,* 1 Cor. ix. 27.

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Ans. There is no doubt but persons of eminent holiness, and who have enjoyed much communion with God, and experienced much of the sweetness of such communion, and of the light of his countenance, may fall for a while into a state of temptation and desertion; nor is it to be wondred at, if they who know the depths of *Satan*, the allurements of the world, the remainders of corruption in themselves, express and nourish a cautious preventive fear; but this is very consistent with the comfortable and well grounded hope of eternal life. There is a vast difference between, even the sinful fear of a *Peter*, and the despairing fear of a *Judas*.

4. But say they, who can know whether God has from eternity ordained him to eternal life?

Ans. This cannot be known immediately and directly by it self, but by its proper effects and fruits, it may; if I am a believer and walk holily before God, I may conclude I am elected; if not, I know that if I die in my present state, I must perish for ever; and this is enough for the support and comfort of believers, and for the awakening and terrifying of the impenitent and unbelievers.

Secret things belong to God, our business is with the things he has revealed; God's decrees are dark, his covenants are plain and sure.

5. They object, that this doctrine of assurance opens a gap to licentiousness.

Ans. This is an old calumny, and has been often refuted; but the best way of refuting it will be, for those who profess to be most assured of their salvation, to live most holily and exemplarily, and to be rich in good works, and study to do all the good they can in the world, while they are in it.

Use 1. Let afflicted consciences take comfort from this doctrine of the possibility of assurance, though they have not yet attained to the thing.

2. Take heed you mistake not security and presumption for assurance.

3. Give all diligence, to make your calling and election sure.

4. In want of full certainty, be thankful for good hope through grace and labour, to walk worthy of your calling and hope,

DISCOURSE XXI.

The Sacraments in the Christian Religion, not more than two.

PROV. XXX. 6.

Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a Lyar.



THESE words are a general caution against adding to the words of God.

Words, in the *Hebrew* dialect, often note or include things.

The sense of the precept is to barr all unwarrantable additions to divine institutions, and we are deterred from making any such additions, by the consideration of divine rebukes, which will attend us in so doing, and from the reproachful character, that such managements will fasten upon us: we shall be found lyars, the most reproachful term that can be fasten'd upon any mortal; for a known lyar

lyar will not be believed even when he speaks true.

The Church of *Rome* sins most notoriously against this precept, and has been found a lyar in many instances; but scarce in any more than in their practice of multiplying Sacraments, and adding five more to the two, which Christ himself has instituted.

I must own this is a dry and barren subject, and I should hardly have medled with it, but that the course of that model of the Popish Controversies, which I have chosen to follow, obligeth me so to do.

There is much of logomachy or strife about words in this dispute, and the nature and definition of the thing thereby signified.

I shall do the best I can (in the manner, and within the limits which this exercise requires) to give you some light into both.

1. God, having resolv'd to deal again with fall'n man for his recovery in the way of a covenant, has thought fit to annex outward visible signs and seals (commonly call'd Sacraments) thereunto, for the confirmation of our faith, and that we might be helped by our very senses, to believe more firmly, and acquiesce more heartily in the love of God towards us, in, and through his own only begotten dearly beloved son.

By these we are not only inform'd of God's good will towards us, but, as by certain marks

marks and badges, we are distinguish'd from the rest of the world, and declar'd a peculiar people unto *Jehovah*.

2. As concerning the word Sacrament, we have no need to draw the saw of contention: We easily grant that in a large and general sense, the name Sacrament may be applied to almost every similitude, type, or sensible sign in which Religion may have any special concern, and so there may not only be two or seven, or ten, or twenty, but a hundred or a thousand sacraments.

3. But the word Sacrament we judge very proper to express a sign or seal of the new Covenant; and so we use it, and justly assert there are but two such of divine appointment, and to which God has promis'd his blessing under the New-Testament dispensation.

A Sacrament is so called, a *Sacrando*, from its being consecrated and separated to a religious use and purpose, viz. for confirmation of God's good will to us, and our dedication and devotedness unto him.

The word notes either a pawn or pledge, or an oath, more especially a military one, of fidelity to ones Prince or General; and hence it has been borrow'd and made use of to signify a divine ordinance, whereby we avouch the Lord for our God, devote our selves to to him, and receive the testimonies of his fa-

favour and of his gracious acceptance of us.

The ecclesiastical use of the word confines us to this sense of it, that it should denote a sign and seal of God's Covenant with us, and ours with him, in and through Christ Jesus, wherein we promise obedience (the grace of God helping us) and God promiseth to us pardon of sin, the assistance of his blessed spirit, and present right to, and certain future admission and reception into the mansions of everlasting glory and felicity.

And thus the word notes both the sign and the thing signified, and (in the most common use of it) denotes the entire complex notion of a federal sign and seal, both on God's part and ours.

4. A Sacrament, in the modern ecclesiastical use of the word, is a sign and seal of the new covenant, or the covenant of God's grace with fall'n man, in, and through a Redeemer.

The *signs* in a Sacrament are the elements which are obvious to our senses (and chiefly to the sight) and *the rites* and *actions* accompanying their celebration.

The things signified are Christ and his benefits, as receiv'd and applied by a living and lively faith; whence he is said to be made to us of God, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30.

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And as Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever, *Heb. 13. 1.* so the sacraments under each dispensation of the covenant represent and exhibit to believers, the same Christ, and the same benefits by him.

5. The union between the sign and the thing signified in a sacrament is of great importance to be observed, it is relative, there is a natural aptitude in the sign to express the thing signified; but its sacred Virtue depends upon *positive, arbitrary* institution, and *that divine*.

For however apt the signs may be in their own nature to signify what is represented by them; yet they cannot avail thereto without a divine institution and blessing, which depend on each other and are inseparable.

6. Hence ariseth the peculiar phraseology in scripture, when sacraments are treated of, that *the sign* should be called by the name of *the thing signified*, and contrarywise; thus Christ is called our Passover, *1 Cor. v. 7.* and thus Circumcision is called the Covenant, and bread the body of Christ.

7. None but God can ordain Sacraments: for, 1. he only has given us the promise of eternal life, and can make it good to us.

2. He alone is the author of that word, which the sacraments seal and confirm to us.

3. Sacraments are ordinances of worship, which none but God has authority to institute.

4. God

4. God alone can bless the Sacraments he has appointed, so as to render them effectual to their designed end; their Virtue does not depend on the intention or qualifications of him who administers them, but on the good pleasure of God declared in his word, and happily experienced by all those who duly attend on them, not by those who neglect them, or trifle in the use of them.

VIII. Four things therefore are specially necessary to constitute a sacrament.

1. An external and visible element, such as water in baptism, bread and wine in the Lord's supper, together with external rites and actions accompanying the administration thereof, as the sprinkling or washing with water in baptism, the breaking of bread, and distributing both that and the cup in the Lord's Supper.

2. Something heavenly and spiritual signified and exhibited to the believing receiver, by the external elements and actions, such as pardon of sin, adoption, right to the sanctifying spirit, and the heavenly inheritance, the glories of the world to come.

3. A special, particular, express, divine institution: without this there can be no such thing as a Sacrament; and it is the highest usurpation for any mortal to pretend to make a Sacrament, and the instituting of rites that have a near affinity to a sacrament cannot
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but be justly very suspicious, and should be avoided by all who have any due tenderness, and concern for the honour of the Redeemer, the only King and head of the Church: others may think of the sign of the Cross as super-added to baptism, as they see cause, but to me it looks so like a sacrament upon a sacrament, a *human* sacrament upon a *divine* one, that I had rather suffer any thing that men can inflict, than make so bold with my Lord Redeemer and his institutions.

4. A sacrament must be a standing ordinance, and of perpetual use in the Church of whose communion it is a badge; thus circumcision and the passover endured as long as the Jewish Church state abode, and so baptism and the Lord's supper must continue as long as the christian church, that is, till time it self shall have an end, and be swallowed up of and in eternity.

IX. It will follow from what has been said, that those called sacraments in the church of *Rome*, besides baptism and the Lord's supper, are not such in the strict and proper sense. They are no signs and seals of the new covenant, or covenant of grace; this we shall endeavour with great plainness and brevity to make out, concerning each of them in particular.

1. For confirmation; that is not, nor can be a sacrament of the covenant of grace; the
Romanists

Romanists describe it to be an anointing with oil by a Bishop, in the forehead of a baptized person in the form of a cross, with these words, *I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the anointing of salvation, in the name of the father, and of the son, and of the holy ghost.*

Now whether this do not look more like a piece of conjuration than a christian sacrament, I durst appeal to the reason of any unprejudic'd man.

For the anointing, which they make the matter of their sacrament, has no divine warrant, the words they use are no where prescribed in scripture; the grace pretended to be signified is no where promised on the use of such a rite; the appropriating the administration to what they call a Bishop has no countenance, either in scripture or primitive antiquity. What can be a mockery, if this be not?

That confirmation, by which those, who were baptized in infancy, are solemnly admitted into the state of adult believers on a profession of their faith, and consent to the baptismal covenant, we disallow not, but wish restored; but this has nothing to do with the fond ceremonies of the church of *Rome*, or the groundless impositions or formalities of others, who boast as if they were the only protestants, but turn one of the

the most solemn transactions of the christian life into a dead formality; for which few, if any are the better, and I am afraid a great many are much the worse.

2. Let us a little consider their pretended sacrament of Penance: The Papists say, it is a true and proper sacrament, instituted for reconciling the faithful unto God, as soon as they fall into grosser sins after baptism.

The external part of this sacrament they absurdly enough place in three things: the contrition of the heart, the confession of the mouth, and the satisfaction of some good work enjoined by a Priest when he gives them absolution, which, according to them, is not meerly declarative; but strictly and properly authoritative: so that the Priest himself does truly and really pardon their sins.

But this doctrine of theirs is contrary to the scriptures, and pernicious to the souls of men; particular repentance for particular known sins, we all own to be indispensibly necessary, *except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish*, Luke xiii. 3, 5. Nor do we deny the fitness and even necessity of publick penance, in case of gross and enormous sins committed by a person in Church communion, and justly cast out, in order to his restoration to forfeited privileges, and that the

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Church may not partake of his sins, nor others be infected by his example; but there is nothing of a sacrament in all this.

Here is no outward visible sign, no sacramental promise sealed by any instituted rite, the confession of sins to a Priest in order to absolution, is without any the least scripture warrant; the contrition of the heart is not visible to men, the confession of the mouth may be false and deceitful, the making of satisfaction, if it be meant as to God, is absurd and blasphemous; if as to man, it is indeed a fruit and evidence of repentance; but can no way come under the notion of a Sacrament, or sacramental rite or action.

Nor can priestly absolution be the form of Penance as a sacrament, because as they use it, it is a meer usurpation, the priest knows not whether the penitent be sincere or not, nor has he power to absolve him, any otherwise than by declaring the promises of the Gospel to the truly penitent, not by an authoritative remission, for so none can forgive sins, but God only, *Mark ii. 7.*

3. Their next Sacrament is Extream Unction, which the Council of *Trent* pronounceth them accursed, who do not acknowledge for a real Sacrament instituted by Christ, and which confers grace, procures pardon of sin, relieves the sick, and sometimes avails to to their recovery.

Now

Now all this is talk without book: That in the primitive Church, anointing with oil did sometimes, being accompanied with fervent prayer avail to miraculous cures, we doubt not, being taught so to believe by the Apostle, *James*, v. 14, 15.

But this was never appointed as a standing sacrament in the Christian Church, it was for the recovery of health; but in the church of *Rome* it is administred only when life is despair'd of; the rites they use are superstitious and mimical to the last degree; no good to soul or body ever came from it that we can learn; the only profit of it is to the Priests, and the only design of it is to raise the esteem of *Mother Church* with dying Bigots, and timorous superstitious Enthusiasts; and its usual effect is to harden impenitent wretches in those last moments of life, that ought to be redeemed for the exercise of a solid repentance, and a lively faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, without which, if their whole bodies were dipt by a priest in consecrated oil, it would avail them nothing.

4. Their fourth sacrament is holy orders, and this they extend to the lesser orders of Door-keepers, Readers, Exorcists, and Acolytes, as well as to the greater of Bishops, Priests and Deacons.

We own the office of the ministry, but deny ordination or orders to be any sacrament, and well we may, because there is no element belonging to them, because they have no promise of saving grace to accompany them; a man may be a true, a useful and successful minister, that has no saving grace, but may be himself a cast away; if orders be a sacrament, so many sorts of orders as are in their Church, so many several kinds of sacraments there must be, and a Door-keeper, as such, must partake of one sacrament, and an Exorcist of another, and a Deacon or a Priest of another, which would fill all with the utmost imaginable confusion.

5. Their last sacrament, which they boast of is matrimony, which we Hereticks do not allow of for such, and therefore according to them are damned.

But this has none of the proper tokens or characters of a sacrament; it was ordained for quite different ends than sacraments are.

In the church of *Rome* Priests may not partake of it, and it is somewhat strange that the same thing should defecrate a Priest, and consecrate a Lay-man.

If sacraments confer grace, *ex opere operato*, a man or woman need but be married in order to be undoubtedly saved; and which is yet worse, a Christian sacrament must be
com-

common to them that are no Christians; for Heathens marry, and that rightfully and lawfully, and their children are legitimate.

Indeed women are said to be saved by, or in child-bearing, 1 *Tim.* ii. 15. But that is not in Virtue of a sacramental grace, but it either notes the birth of our Saviour by his blessed mother, whereby all that are saved do obtain eternal life; or rather it notes, that though the pains of Child-bearing are a fruit of the Curse for the first sin, yet godly women believing in Christ shall be saved from wrath to come, and shall ordinarily obtain providential salvation in that distressful hour, though many times they seem to be in the very Jaws of death, and their coming off with life is next to miraculous.

But I am weary of confuting the idle dreams of our adversaries.

Let me close all with the following applicatory hints.

1. Learn hence to keep close to the Law and to the Testimony, add not to God's words, lest we be found lyars.

Endeavour to preserve the purity of Christian worship, and adorn it with an holy conversation.

2. Detest the Anti-christian Tyranny and superstition: How have they deformed

the primitive Christianity by their additions, which are not from heaven but of man.

3. Wait on God aright in the use of those Sacraments which you are sure he has instituted, and seek to, and depend on him for a blessing on them.





DISCOURSE XXII.

Against Transubstantiation.

MARK XIV. 14.

And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them and said, take, eat, this is my body.

SPEECH is that talent by which we express the sense of our minds; and as by reason we are internally and really, so by the power of speaking we are externally and visibly distinguished from brutes.

But never since man was created upon earth, were poor words so tortured as these plain and solemn, but easy, words of our blessed Lord, *this is my body*, have been by the wicked Papists.

Sooner may oil be got out of a flint, than their Doctrine out of these words; yet they will have it that they contain that frightful monster, Transubstantiation.

The Lord's Supper is a Sacrament; and this, with the following verse, contains its institution by our blessed Lord, where every thing is so plain, that an unprejudic'd Idiot cannot miss his meaning, though many men of extensive and profound literature, being blinded with prejudice, cannot, or will not find it.

This is my body, plainly means, this bread is the sign, seal and memorial of my crucified body offered on the Cross, a sacrifice for your sins.

Not this bread is turn'd into my very natural body, by I know not what monstrous (rather than miraculous) change, which would never have been thought of, but to favour the idolatrous practice of Image-worship, and exalt the people's reverence for the Priests as makers of the Deity.

The point I am to speak to is, That there is no Transubstantiation in the Lord's Supper.

I shall pursue my wonted method in speaking to it,

And 1st, I must tell you what the Papists mean by the hard word Transubstantiation.

First of all (say the *Trent* fathers) the holy synod teacheth, and plainly and openly professeth, that in the Sacrament of the holy *Eucharist*, after the consecration of the bread and wine, our Lord Jesus Christ, very God, and very man, is truly, really and substantially contained under the species of those sensible signs: and again, because say they, Christ our Redeemer said, that *that* which he offered under the species of bread, was truly his body, therefore the Church of God has always believed, and this holy synod doth now again declare, that there is a conversion of the whole substance of bread, into the whole substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of wine into his substance, which conversion or change is fitly and properly called by the holy Catholick Church, Transubstantiation, and the Council denounceth an *Anathema* against all those who believe, or teach otherwise.

The Council contents it self thus briefly and obscurely to define what they count the greatest mystery of Christian Religion, not daring to determine any thing about the manner of this conversion of the bread into the body of Christ, because their own Doctors differ greatly among themselves about it. Observe

2. That the question between us and them, is not whether the body of Christ be
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in any sense present in the Sacrament, for we believe it to be present there to the faith of the worthy communicants, who in that ordinance do truly feed on it to their souls health and nourishment, and this in vertue of the sacramental union, between the elements and the things signified, represented, and exhibited by them.

But we deny, that the elements are turned into the very natural body and blood of Christ, which they assert.

3. Nor do we quarrel with them (though they do among themselves) about the manner of the conversion of the elements into Christ's body; for we deny that any such thing is done, and therefore leave no room to enquire how it is done.

They indeed do some of them assert that the bread is annihilated, others, that it is turned into Christ's body, the species, or visible appearances of bread remaining; others of them say, that the bread is taken away, and the body of Christ substituted in its room; but let them decide these matters as they think fit themselves, it does not concern us to determine of the manner of a thing, which we know to be in it self false and absurd.

4. Nor do we dispute with them, whether there be any change in the bread and wine after consecration, we readily grant that there is in that a very great one.

But

But then it is a moral change, which respects the use of the elements, not a physical one, respecting their nature and substance.

The bread and wine are the same in their nature and substance, after consecration as before, but they greatly differ as to their use and ends, as wax when it becomes a seal, or silver when it is stamped into money.

We shall now prove the absurdity and impossibility of Transubstantiation, briefly from these three topicks. first from sense, secondly from reason, thirdly from Scripture, or the principles of faith grounded on divine revelation.

And if either of these ways we are assured, that there is nor can be no such conversion of the elements into the body of Christ, as the *Papists* teach, we have all the evidence we can desire, that the Popish doctrine is false, and that the Protestant faith in this matter, is the very truth.

And 1st. Let us consider the argument from sense. That which the senses in their right disposition and due qualification, do uniformly, always, and every where witness must needs be true, but the sound senses of all men every where, and at all times do testify that bread and wine do remain the same, as to their nature and substance after consecration as before; therefore this is

is the very truth, and there can be no such thing as Transubstantiation in the *Eucharist*.

To assert the contrary, would be to render our senses useless, and to introduce an universal scepticism among mankind.

Our senses contemplating the sacred elements, do not only declare to us, that there is nothing sensible in them, that should give us reason to believe that Christ is there corporally and locally present; but they do as fully assure us, that what we see, and taste, and smell, and touch, are truly bread and wine, as they assure us of the truth and reality of any of those other sensible objects, that we daily converse with.

The *Papists* may as well tell us, that a star is a dark lanthorn, or that a monkey is a man, or that a book is a horse, as that the elements after consecration are not what we perceive them to be, real very natural bread and wine.

Our senses here are conversant about their proper objects: we have the witness, not of one only, but of four, of our five senses; we have all possible opportunity to act deliberately in the judgment we make of their testimony, they witness the same truth to us, not once, but often, yea always (whenever the occasion presents) and that alike to all men. A sober ingenuous *Papist* will not deny, but that for ought he can see, or feel, or taste,

taste, or smell, the bread and wine after consecration is as much bread and wine as it was before, and after all must we believe it not to be such, but quite another thing? The *Papists* here do not argue, but play the madmen, and call every man, they would pretend to reason into their opinion, a stupid fool.

But here they tell us Transubstantiation is a great mystery, not to be judged of by sense, but by faith.

We deny not, but that the Christian Religion has mysteries in it, which are not to be judged of by sense, no nor by reason, neither, as exceeding their utmost force; but then the mysterious matter of faith is not an object of sense, nor any thing within the view and comprehension of reason, but something that we could have known nothing at all of, but by immediate Divine Revelation; but this is not the case here, we need no extraordinary or special revelation to tell us, whether bread be bread or not, and if our senses cannot tell us that, they cannot tell us whether there be such a Book as the Bible in the World, or any such Words in it: whether any true miracles were ever wrought? Whether there be such a City as *Rome*? Or such a man as the Pope existing any where? And this is a fine method to make a man a *Papist*, is it not? It may turn a man into an *In-fidel*,

fidel, or a *Brute*: but it can never make him of any Religion; for if such testimony of sense be false, no testimony of any thing can be true, or at least certainly known to be so.

But they further tell us, that our senses sometimes deceive us, therefore we ought not to trust them?

To which the answer is plain, our sound senses never deceive us about their proper objects in a due situation, and under proper qualifications, our rash judgments often deceive us, but that is not the fault of our senses, but of our want of caution and deliberation, and comparing things (as we might and ought to do) in a true light.

But it is a mad way of arguing; our senses (through our own fault and folly) sometimes deceive us, therefore we must never trust them: our Saviour I am sure was of another mind, when he tells his disciples, who were in doubt of the truth of his resurrection, and were afraid they had seen a spectre instead of their dearest Lord and Master, *Behold, (saith he) my hands and my feet, that it is I my self: handle me, and see, for a spirit has not flesh and bones, as ye see me have, Luke xxiv. 39.* What satisfaction could this have given them (on the Popish supposition, that we must not believe our senses about their proper objects) none
at

at all, for they might still have fancied that he was a spirit, and there would have been no means left to convince them of the contrary.

If we could not tell bread to be bread when we see and taste it, God himself must be our deceiver, for our faculties are such as he has given us, and we have no better to judge of their proper objects by.

Nor will it serve their turn to say, that our senses can judge only of the external accidents, not of the inward substance, which they represent to us; for these two are always inseparable, the accidents cannot subsist alone, and the substance is always such as they declare it to be.

2. Having considered the argument from sense, let us hearken a little what reason saith to the matter, and I dare boldly say, the whole reason of all mankind is against transubstantiation.

Reason assures us, that one body can fill up but one place at a time, it is absurd and impossible for one and the same body to be in different (and those vastly distant places) at one and the same time, as in *Heaven* and on *Earth*: at *Rome*, *Paris*, and *London*; for then it should be the same body, and not the same, which is the grossest contradiction imaginable.

Rea-

Reason does certainly inform us, that a body consists of different parts, and that extension, and impenetrability are essential to body, as body, and therefore a whole humane body cannot be included in a wafer, much less in every crumb of it, as the *Papists* say that of our Saviour is.

If we hear reason, we must conclude that accidents cannot be without a subject, or substance in which they inhere, and to which they belong: roundness, whiteness, smell, taste, tangibility, cannot be the accidents of nothing, as they must be in the Sacrament, if the *Papists* doctrine be true; for they are not the accidents of Christ's body, nor are they accidents of the bread, for there is no such thing according to them; therefore they must be the accidents of nothing, which is such nonsense, as would shock a *Savage* or a *Mahometan*.

Again our reason assures us, that one thing cannot be changed into another, but the accidents must be changed as well as the substance: who would have said our Saviour had changed water into wine; if the accidents of water had remained, or if God had raised up of stones children unto *Abraham*, would they have been stones still, and not men, it is enough to put a meek man into a passion, to be forced to argue against such principles as these, and to reason against what

is absolutely ridiculous : but so it will be, when men are given up to strong delusion to believe lies ; and controversies are managed, not with a design to find out truth, but to promote and strengthen a secular worldly interest.

To all this, the *Papists* pretend to have sufficiently answered, by saying, that in mysteries of faith, reason is not to be hearkened to, but to be captivated, *i. e.* we must *put out our eyes* that we may *see*, and *stop our ears* that we may *bear*.

That our reason and understanding is greatly corrupted by the fall we readily acknowledge, but that we are still reasonable creatures, and that God deals with us as such, is no less evident ; we must then attend to and improve our reason, such as it is, the best we can, and implore the spirit and grace of God to lead us into all truth and sanctify it to us : *pride of reason* is *bad*, but *contempt of it* seems to be *worse* ; for revelation can have no hold of him who despiseth his reason, that is his own soul, such most justly, and yet most necessarily perish.

Mysteries may be *above reason*, but they cannot be *against* it. There are *mysteries* in religion, which we cannot by reason prove to be true, but there is not one that I know of, that we cannot by the same reason (weak and corrupted as it is) prove to be credible,

viz. on supposition that God has revealed it, which whether he has or no, reason must judge, for nothing else can.

Grace does not destroy nature, but perfect it, nor doth faith exclude reason.

But the Papists further tell us, that the contradictions we charge upon their doctrine of Transubstantiation, are not *real*, but *feigned* ones: if *this* were *true*, the controversy were at an end, and the day were their own; but if Transubstantiation be not a heap of palpable contradictions, we are content to be their bond-slaves, if there be one soul upon earth, that can tell what a contradiction is, and dares speak as he thinks, and knows what the word means, that does not think it full of contradictions, I durst venture (which I would not for all the world) to turn Papist to-morrow.

For Christ's body to be in two several distant places, at once, without being in all the intermediate space, is a gross and palpable contradiction, if ever there was one in the world.

But they still insist upon it, that with God all things are possible, and Almighty Power can transubstantiate a thin round wafer, into the true and real body of our Lord Jesus Christ, *that very body* that was born of the *Virgin Mary*.

Hear

Hear O heavens and be astonished O earth! men pretend to magnify the divine Omnipotence, and dwindle it into nothing; but ascribe to God a power of making contradictions true, set Almighty Power on work to do so much, that it does nothing at all, for this is the truth of the case.

If God by his Almighty Power make bread to be the body of Christ, he makes that very thing to be now, *de novo*, which was actually in being, above 1700 years ago: he creates a thing already in being, which is like killing a man that is already dead: how bold do these wretches make with the *Almighty Being*! what is it but fleering in the face of Omnipotence and making a jest of all that is sacred?

Besides, we are not to judge of what God has done, or will do, by what he can do: where has he told us, that he would make bread the body of Christ? and were the thing possible, unless God had revealed it, we were fools for believing it; and they must have better evidence than the sound of the words, *this is my body*, to prove that God has revealed it, or we may as well conclude, that Christ is transubstantiated into the shape of a deer, or a vine, or a shepherd, as that the bread in the Sacrament is his real natural body.

We may as well believe that God can lye, or sin, as that he can make bread to be the true natural body of his son Jesus Christ; the thing cannot be done by any power created or uncreated, which is no reflexion on the divine Omnipotence, because the doing of it, would be the effect of impotency, with which he is no ways chargeable.

3dly, It now remains, that we consider the arguments against transubstantiation, from *Faith* and *Revelation*. This is a large field but I must sum up things very briefly.

Here therefore let me hint,

1. That the sacramental elements are called by the same names in Holy Scripture, after consecration as before.

Christ gave his disciples bread after he had consecrated it, and bid them take and eat; it was bread that he took and brake, and therefore it was bread that he gave, or else he would have given them notice of the stupendous change, that (according to the Papists) he had by three or four words speaking, made in it.

He calls the wine he gave them, after consecration, the fruit of the vine, therefore it could not be *his very natural blood*, for that was no ways susceptible of such an appellation, *Matt. xxvi. 29.*

The apostle *Paul* calls it bread (even after consecration) three times in a breath, *1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28.*

2. The

2. The very words which they bring to support their monstrous doctrine of Transubstantiation, *this is my body*, are full against them, for the word *this* can note nothing but the bread, which our Saviour had *then* in his hand, Christ saith, *this is my body*, which it could not be according to themselves, till the whole sentence was spoken; therefore if their opinion be true, he pronounced it to be his body, before it really was so, and it *was* and *was not* his body at one and the same instant. Further, Christ does not say, *this is*, or *shall be made my body*, but *this is*, that is, *represents, signifies* my body, and seals the blessings of the new covenant to you. if the bread were made Christ's body, by his pronouncing those words, it must be his whole body or his broken body, it could not be his whole body, for that was not given for us, nor his broken body, for it was not broken, till afterwards.

3. It is enough to confute the doctrine of Transubstantiation, that the Scripture saith nothing of it, there is not a word that way in the whole Bible, the words of institution, and the passages they quote in the sixth of *John*, make abundantly more against, than for them, as I might easily shew, had I time.

That such an astonishing miracle, as this, should be passed over in silence, is wonderful indeed, and a plain proof, that it is

so far from being a miracle, that it is a meer cheat and juggle, the Priests contrivance for their own glory, and not a work of God, for the honour of his name.

4. On supposition of Transubstantion, the Eucharist is not, cannot be any Sacrament: for if the body of Christ be in the Sacrament, it cannot be a memorial of his body, for that can only be of what is absent. Did ever any man tell his friend, I am going from you, but I will still stay with you, that you may remember me: there is no sacramental analogy on their supposition. Many other things might be said, to shew the falseness and absurdity of this monstrous doctrine; but I must conclude, which I shall do with the following practical hints.

1. Let us take heed of partaking with the church of *Rome*, in the idolatry which this doctrine of Transubstantiation was devised to promote, *viz.* image-worship, and also that which has follow'd upon it, bread, or wafer-worship.

2. Let us abhor the tyranny and bloody cruelty of that Church: this has always been the burning article. God deliver us and our posterity from their false flaming zeal!

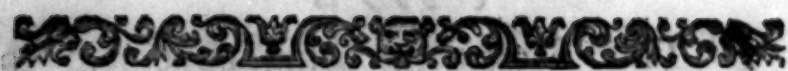
3. See to it, that we neither neglect, nor profane that blessed Sacrament, which is yet administred among us in its purity.

4. This

4. This Sacrament being appointed to strengthen our union with Christ and one another, let us see to it, that we cleave to him by faith, and to each other by love.

5. Wait in faith, patience and hope for Christ's second coming; look not for him upon Altars, but expect and prepare for his coming in the Clouds.





DISCOURSE XXIII.

Of the Tyranny and Sacrilege of the Church of *Rome*, in denying the Cup in the Sacrament to her Laity.

MARK xiv. 23.

And he took the Cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave to them : and they all drank of it.



IN our last exercise, we gave you an account of the absurdity and impossibility of Transubstantiation, from the words immediately foregoing.

We shall now, from the words read shew you the tyranny and sacrilege of the Church of *Rome*, in denying the Cup in the Sacrament to her Laity.

And first, let me note to you, that the denying the Cup to the people is a consequence of their absurd doctrine of Transubstantiation ; for one absurdity being granted, a thousand follow.

For

For when men once became throughly conceited that the bread was really changed into the very natural body of the Lord Jesus Christ, they were then easily persuaded, that in taking his body, they took his blood also *by way of Concomitancy*, as they call it. And then presently a superstitious conceit arose in their minds of the danger and indecency of spilling the wine, and therewith the real blood of Christ, which they reckoned must be a horrid profanation; whence at first they dipped the bread in consecrated wine and so gave it to the people, but afterwards they came to think that this was no sufficient security against all dangers that might happen, and therefore thought best at once to take the Cup wholly from the people.

Hence they appointed that both the elements that should be consecrated, but the Priest only who administred should partake of the wine, and the people be content to partake of the blood of Christ only as contained in the bread, become by consecration really his body: though by the way, they herein deal very absurdly, for the bread in the Sacrament represents Christ's body as broken, *i.e.* as crucified, pierced, and the blood actually separated from it.

Thus have they sacrilegiously separated the two elements, which our Saviour himself

self has joined together in this blessed Institution, and what Christ appointed for the benefit of all, they have confined to the use of a very few.

2. Hence History acquaints us, that this horrid change in Christ's last solemn appointment, so reproachful to Christ himself, to the Apostles, to the ancient and present Church, alarm'd the whole Christian world, and fill'd all things with noise, tumult and confusion: when this yoke was first endeavoured to be put on the necks of Christians in *Bobemia*, particularly *John Hufs* and *Jerome of Prague* opposed this cursed Invasion and Robbery, and seal'd the truth with their blood, in so much that the Pope himself was fain to grant the *Bobemians* a dispensation in this matter, to prevent their total revolt from him, and utter renouncing him and his authority and jurisdiction; which notwithstanding many of them justly and wisely did.

3. The Council of *Constance* defines, that although Christ himself administred the Sacrament in both kinds, and order'd it to be so administred; yet this notwithstanding (*hoc tamen non obstante*, are their very words) the Council appoints that it shall be received by the people but in one kind, and declares them accursed who teach or practice otherwise; 'tis, say they, a law of the Church, and no man may reject or change it,

And

And this has been since ratified with very little since alteration, both by the Council of *Basil*, and that of *Trent*.

4. The Protestants on the contrary do justly hold and assert, that the Sacrament of the Eucharist, being instituted and administered by our Lord Jesus Christ himself in both kinds, all Christians are bound to communicate according to his institution, and to drink the wine, no less than to eat the bread in the Lord's Supper.

This they not only may, but must do (unless any natural unavoidable reason force and necessitate them to do otherwise) and it is a horrid sacrilege for any to take away the Cup from the people, as the church of *Rome* does.

5. Therefore the question between us and the church of *Rome* is, not whether Christ instituted and administered this Ordinance in both kinds, for this the Papists readily grant us; but whether the faithful in all ages ought to follow his example herein? And the use of the Cup be not essential and necessary to a compleat Sacrament, not indifferent and accidental, which we may do, or omit, as we see cause?

Now all Protestants hold that the Cup is essential to the Sacrament, and of divine right; must be given to, and received by all Christian Communicants.

6. We

6. We deny not but in cases of extream necessity the Communion may be taken in one kind, *viz.* where there is a natural invincible antipathy to the taste or smell of wine, and perhaps where wine is utterly impossible to be come at, and if there be any such like cases; but this gives no liberty to withhold the Cup from a whole order of men, much more from the far larger part of mankind, as the Papists do.

In short, we assert that no man, who can, and desires to partake of it, being duly qualified, may be denied the use of the Cup or Wine in the Lord's Supper, any more than of the Bread.

And our reasons, in confirmation of the Protestant Doctrine, are as follows:

1. Christ himself positively instituted the Sacrament in both kinds, so administred it himself, and so left it to be administred by his Apostles and their successors in the sacred ministry throughout all ages. They must then sure be very bold men (not to say impudent) who dare vary from, much more directly oppose his appointment herein.

Such deny his *headship*; will not have him to reign over them; assume to themselves an authority that was never committed to them; and therefore shall undoubtedly be brought forth at the last day as his avowed enemies, and slain before him, *Luke xix. 27.*
Christ

Christ did not only give the Bread buth e Cup to his Disciples, and bad them all drink of it, *Matt. xxvi. 27.* And as he commanded, so it was done, they all drank of it, as my text tells us.

Surely it cannot be needless to observe Christ's institution, or lawful to neglect or alter it.

To this the Papists reply, that Marriage is God's institution, yet all are not obliged to be Married; the Ministry is God's ordinance, yet all are not bound to be Ministers.

But this is perfect trifling; for God has no where commanded all men to be married, and he has described the office and work of the ministry so, as plainly proves that all are not capable of it, and the institution would be destroyed by making it common to all, for then there would be none to minister to.

Christ here institutes a Rite to be observed by all who profess themselves his Disciples, and therefore they must observe it as he has left it, and not after their own fancies; nor may they add to it, or take away from it.

But they further plead that Christ said this only to the Apostles, not to all men: for then Heathens, Jews and Turks might communicate; nor to all Christians, for then Infants would be included; nor to all adult believers, for they are not Priests or Ministers as the Apostles were.

But

But neither will this salve heal the sore; for the Papists themselves (at least most of them) allow that the command, *do this*, that is *communicate* in my last supper, belongs to all Christians; and if we allow the contrary interpretation, the Laity would be no more obliged to eat of the bread than to drink of the wine, and so we must fall in with those Enthusiasts who assert the Lord's Supper to have been only a temporary appointment, and not to oblige Christians to the end of time, even till Christ's second coming, as generally all Divines, Popish as well as Protestant, agree it does: further, in the first administration Christ himself sustain'd the person of the minister or administrator, and the Apostles were consider'd but as private Christians and Communicants; what therefore *they* did, *we* are obliged to do. As for Infants they cannot examine themselves, and Heathens, Jews and Turks are out of the Christian pale, and therefore while they continue such, they have no right or title to the Gospel Table, and the entertainments of it.

2. We argue from the express words of the Apostle Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 28. and 1 Cor. x. 16. *For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that*

that cup. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ.

Can any thing be plainer than it is from these texts, that the bread and wine are inseparable in the Lord's Supper, and that no one may (at least in ordinary Cases) partake of the one without partaking of the other.

The Lord's death is shewed forth by eating the bread and drinking the wine jointly, and not by one of them only.

We have here no distinction made between a Lay-man and a Clergy-man; but whosoever eats the bread is enjoined in like manner to drink the cup.

The Apostle bespeaks all the faithful alike, without making any difference; and they, who would draw his meaning to another sense, do but seek a knot in a Bull-rush.

To this they say, the Apostle's words ought to be rendred, whosoever shall eat this bread, or drink this cup, &c. (the *Greek* particle being *η* *vel*, or *which* is a disjunctive one) from whence they would infer, that if we do but eat the bread, or drink the cup, we sufficiently answer the design of the institution; but this is evidently false and absurd, for then it would be enough to drink the Cup without eating the bread, which even the Papists themselves will not allow of. Again,
the

the sin of unworthy communicating may be, and is committed by the abuse of either of the elements, which were a sufficient ground for the Apostle's making use of the disjunctive particle.

But thirdly, there is nothing more common, both in sacred and profane Writers (as the learned know) than the promiscuous use of disjunctive and copulative particles, putting *or* for *and*, and *and* for *or*; therefore we are to be determin'd not by meer words and sounds, but by the sense and scope of the place, and the reason of the thing; and the Apostle often useth the copulative particle in this very case, yea, and some very good Copies of the New Testament read it *and* in this very place, so that this plea of theirs is a miserable shift.

The Apostle plainly speaks to the body of the Christian Church at *Corinth*, for it was they, and not the Ministers only or chiefly, that were guilty of the abuses in reference to this holy ordinance, which he reproveth, and endeavours to reform.

They are obliged to eat and drink, who are obliged to examine themselves; and surely that is the duty not of Priests only, but of all adult Christians.

But they tell us, that all this will only prove that it is *lawful* to communicate in both kinds, but not that it is *necessary*: but
if

if it be lawful, why do they forbid it? and if it be lawful, it must be necessary, because the Apostle recommends it to the *Corinthians*, as that which he had received of the Lord; and surely what Christ has appointed, it is necessary that Christians should observe.

3. I argue from those known words of our Blessed Saviour, *Do this in remembrance of me*, Luke xxii. 19. These words do plainly refer to the whole administration, and import, that this holy ordinance should in all time coming be administered and partaken of in the Christian Church, as it was then done by Christ and his Apostles, *i. e.* both the elements should be consecrated by the Minister, and both taken, eaten and drank by the Communicants.

Nor is it of any weight that those words are mentioned by the Evangelist, after the blessing and taking only of the bread, since the Apostle *Paul* mentions them expressly, after the delivery of the Cup, 1 *Cor.* xi. 25.

4. The people's partaking of the cup is no less necessary to the ends of this sacrament, than their eating of the bread. What are the two principal ends of this ordinance, but the shewing of Christ's death, and the nourishing of our souls by feeding on Christ sacrificed for us, which is done by the lively faith of the worthy communicant? Now the wine doth no less signify to us the shedding

of Christ's blood, than the bread doth the crucifixion of his body; nor can a compleat feast be aptly resembled where there is nothing to drink; for thirst is as strong and painful an appetite as hunger, and the bodily life can no more be preserved without giving ease to the one than to the other.

The whole analogy of the sacrament is destroyed, by depriving the people of one of the elements. The Papists tell us, that the *Israelites* were nourish'd with manna alone in the wilderness; but that is a gross mistake, for the Apostle acquaints us expressly, that they all drank of that Rock that followed them (that is, the water that flowed from the Rock) and *that Rock was Christ*, 1 Cor. x. 4. they had spiritual drink as well as spiritual meet.

5. The people had a right to the thing signified by the Cup, *viz.* the blood of Christ, therefore they had undoubtedly a right to the sign it self, he who had granted them the greater, would not deny them the less.

6. The communicating in both kinds had been the constant practice of the ancient Church down from the Apostles times, which the best and most learned of the Papists themselves do not deny; and though this alone would not be a sufficient argument to us, yet it ought to be allowed for such by them who are always boasting of antiquity and

and the authority of the Church: and if the present Church be infallible, the ancient Church was once the present one, and then according to them the infallible one, and so we have two infallible Churches contradicting one another, which is enough to satisfy any reasonable man, that *neither* of them was, or is infallible.

The Council of *Constance* owns, that in the primitive Church, believers communicated in both kinds, and that Christ appointed it should be so, and yet declare, that *for the future* they will have it otherwise; which is such impudent blasphemy, as may well make the ears of those that hear it to tingle.

It is a remarkable saying of one of their own Popes (*Gelasius* by name) we have found, says he, that there are some, who when they have taken the bread, abstain from partaking of the Cup; such he calls superstitious persons, and requires that they either partake of the entire Sacrament, or be driven wholly from it, because (they are his very words) *The division of one, and the same mystery (or Sacrament) cannot be without gross sacrilege:* surely this Pope was fallible and deceived, or the Councils of *Constance* and of *Trent* were so: let the *Papists* chuse which they please, it is no concern of ours.

I might add hereto the consent of the *Greek and Eastern Churches*, but it is needless.

less. The word of God is our rule of faith and worship, and where that is plain, and exprefs (as we have shown you, it is in the present case) what need have we of farther witness? if we receive the credible witness of men, the witness of God is greater.

Let us now hear a little further what the *Papists* have to say for themselves in this matter.

And their first plea is from *Acts* ii. 42. *And they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers, Acts* xx. 7. *On the first day of the week, the Disciples came together to break bread.*

In both these places, the Sacrament of the Lord's supper, they say, is spoken of, and it is described only by breaking of bread, therefore Communion in one kind is lawful, and was the allowed practice (at least sometimes) even so early.

But perhaps it is more than they can prove, that in both those places the Sacrament of the *Eucharist* is spoken of; but *granting that*, there will no such consequence follow as they would draw from it; for nothing is more common in Scripture, and all Authors than such *synechdokes*, as wherein a part is put for the whole, and in the case of feasting particularly; so *Joseph's* brethren are said to eat bread with him, *Gen.* xxxi. 54. when yet

yet no body ever dreamed that they had a dry feast.

And the keeping of the Passover is called by the name of *eating* it, though they always drank, as well as eat in that ordinance.

2. They tell us, that in partaking of the body of Christ, the people partake of his blood too, by way of concomitancy.

But this trick of concomitancy (as Dr. Tillotson no less justly than merrily calls it) has no manner of foundation, either in Scripture, or the reason of the thing.

For 1. It depends on the doctrine of Transubstantiation, which we have before refuted.

2. Though the flesh and blood of Christ were really united in the natural body of Christ, it does not follow, that there is such a union between the signs of his body and blood, that he who partakes of the one, must thereby necessarily partake of both.

For the bread and wine are different signs, appointed by Christ himself to be distinctly partaken of.

Further, he who receives Christ spiritually, receives whole Christ by one act of faith, but he who receives Christ sacramentally, must exercise distinct acts of faith on him, as represented *by bread*, noting *his broken body*, and *by wine*, as noting *his blood shed for us*.

Again, the Sacrament represents to us the body of Christ as slain for us, and under that consideration his flesh and blood are to be eyed as separated from each other, and so distinctly represented to our faith.

Besides, what reason is there to prefer a Priest in this matter before a Lay-man? why may not he partake of the blood by concomitancy as well as another? but this (as well as other of their tricks) was invented to set an undue distance between those they call Priests and other Christians: that an excess of reverence in the Laity might make way for an excessive and oppressive Tyranny of their Clergy, who never think themselves well used, unless they have full scope to lord it over God's heritage.

And if their doctrine be true, it might as well be said the bread is Christ's blood, and the wine is his body, which I believe would startle any man to hear.

As to their pleas from infants not communicating, dying persons receiving a half Sacrament, &c. they are not worth insisting on.

And, I profess, I cannot but wonder how so large a part of the Christian world has been so long impos'd upon by *the Church and Court of Rome*, in so plain and manifest a case; but it is to be imputed to a spiritual drunkenness, wherewith the scarlet whore has

has infatuated the Kings and Nations of the earth; God for their other sins, in his just judgment, suffering her to make them drunk with the cup of the wine of her fornications.

Let me now hint the use of all in a few words.

1. How exceeding great is the love of Christ to his Church, manifested in the full provisions of his House and Table!

2. What horrid sacrilege is the *Romish*-Church guilty of, in robbing the Children of Christ's family of himself, their appointed nourishment!

3. How inexcusable are Protestants, who may have a whole Sacrament, but will have none of it, will not draw near to Christ for sacramental communion, but carry it as if the Table of the Lord were become contemptible in their eyes! Can such wonder if they hear at last those dreadful words, *Depart from me?*

Let us all be *serious* and *constant* in the use of this Ordinance, and endeavour to make our profiting by it appear both to our selves and others.



DISCOURSE XXIV.

Of the Sacrifice of the Mass.

HEB. X. 11, 12, 13, 14.

And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sin: but this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God: from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool. For by one offering, he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.



WE are now (by the good hand of our God upon us for good) come to the close of what we design'd in confutation of the gross errors of Popery, This

|| This service was begun, when that enemy (and an enemy it is of the worst sort, both to God and man) threatned to break in upon us like a flood: but blessed be God, who by his spirit and providence hath lifted up a standard against him, by the seasonable advancement of our Protestant Sovereign King *George* to the throne of these kingdoms; where may he long reign in righteousness, and his posterity after him throughout all generations, even till the end of time! and may every true British Protestant say *Amen*.

|| This last error, which we are now to take a survey of, *viz.* the sacrifice of the Mass is a comprehension of the principal and most poisonous errors, fanaticisms, and idolatries, of that detestable sect; but having overthrown the monstrous tenet of Transubstantiation, on which the sacrifice and ceremonies of the mass are wholly grounded, a few plain hints may suffice to answer the design of the present exercise, since Transubstantiation and the Mass stand or fall together, and the one having *lost*, the other cannot *hold* its ground.

The Apostle in the text read to you teacheth us, that sacraments, which must daily or frequently be offer'd, cannot take away sin, but the one sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, can expiate sin, and has done it effectually: of which we have full assurance, in that God the Father has admitted him *to sit down*, and
that

that for ever, on his right hand, and will subdue all his enemies under him ; from whence we may well and safely conclude the sufficiency of his one only sacrifice for the perfecting, or absolving and making completely holy and happy all the elect, and that there is not, can not be, nor needs any other.

Here therefore let the following particulars be seriously and impartially consider'd.

1. The name *Mass* is not of so ancient date as the Papists pretend.

Baronius impudently tells us, that the *Mass* is the most ancient of all the names given to the holy ordinance of the Lord's Supper ; but how then comes *this* and not *the other* to be made use of by the Apostles in the New Testament ? and whoever will search antiquity, will easily find that the name *Eucharist* is of much longer standing than that of *Mass*. The very derivation of the name shews it to be of *Latin* (that is comparatively modern) date ; but I do but just hint these things for orders sake, it not being worth while, or indeed suitable to insist upon them in a popular discourse.

2. The Papists by the word *Mass* understand a propitiatory sacrifice of the body and blood of Christ, for the sins both of the living and dead, and *that* under the species of bread and wine, the substance of those elements being destroy'd, or vanish'd, or chang'd,
let

let them explain it how they will, and the accidents only remaining.

The substance of the doctrine of the Papists, as defined by the Council of *Trent*, is to this effect represented by the learned *Turretine*, viz. that though our Lord Jesus Christ did once offer up himself to God the Father a propitiation for our sins, on the altar of the Cross, yet because his priesthood was never to cease, he has in his last supper left a sacrifice, in which that bloody one of his should be represented; and the saving virtue of it, for the remission of those sins whereof we are daily guilty, should be apply'd, in this, they say he shewed himself a priest after the order of *Melchisedeck*, by offering up his body and blood to God the Father, under the species of bread and wine, and under those symbols gave them to his Apostles, who were then priests, and commanded them and their successors in that priesthood to offer his body and blood as a propitiatory sacrifice, by using those very words, and no other, *Do this in remembrance of me*: and thus they tell us, the Catholick Church hath always understood and taught.

And they further say, the same Christ is contain'd and offer'd in the sacrifice of the *Mass* unbloodily, who once offer'd up himself on the altar of the cross, with the shedding of his blood; and therefore they assert, that the sacrifice

crifice in the Eucharist, (which they call the Mass) is truly propitiatory, and that by the offering of it, God is reconciled, and grants to man his grace, and the gift of repentance, forgiving their greatest crimes and offences on account thereof; and that it is truly the very same sacrifice, which is offer'd by the priest in the Mass, that was offer'd by our Saviour Jesus Christ on the cross, and all the difference between them is only in the way and manner of offering.

To recite such stuff as this, is to confute it; for it is partly unintelligible, partly fraudulent, and for the greatest part of it, it is palpably false and absurd, as we shall plainly shew you in what follows.

The Bishop of *Condom*, and some other of the Popish writers, endeavour indeed to soften the harshness of the Councils definition by milder phrases, but they dare not speak out for fear of suffering themselves as Hereticks, while they endeavour to gain, or ensnare and delude those, whom they call by that opprobrious name.

3. The Protestant doctrine in this matter, (which we believe with our hearts, and by the grace of God are ready to confess with our mouths, whatever it may cost us) is, that there is no true, real, and properly propitiatory sacrifice in the Christian Church, but *that one and only sacrifice* of Christ Jesus, which

which *he himself* offer'd upon the cross; and that this sacrifice neither can, nor ought to be repeated. And therefore we reject and abhor the Popish sacrifice of the Mass, as directly contrary to the holy Scriptures and the Christian faith grounded thereon, as absurd, idolatrous, and most contumelious and injurious to the honour of our blessed Lord, and that one offering, whereby he has perfected them, that are sanctified.

That herein we have right and reason on our side, the following arguments may fully satisfy us.

I. In that the Scripture is wholly silent as to the sacrifice of the Mass, and makes no mention of any other propitiatory sacrifice, under the Gospel, besides that one which our blessed Saviour made of himself upon the cross.

It is a wonderful thing, if such a mystery as this were of Christ's appointing, that neither he himself, nor any of his Apostles, should ever make the least mention of it; and I dare say, he must have better eyes than his neighbours, that can find one syllable about it, from the first verse of *St. Matthew's* Gospel to the last word of *St. John's* Revelation. Would neither the importance of the matter, nor the difficulty of believing, nor danger of erring about it, have prevailed with the holy writers, to give

give us a plain declaration of the sacrifice of the Mass, if it had indeed been, (as the Papists say it is) an essential, and most necessary part of our holy religion?

Again, would the Apostles (*St. Paul* especially) have said so much as they have done of the legal and typical priests and sacrifices, and not a word of the standing propitiatory sacrifice of the Gospel in the Mass, if they had known any thing of the matter, or believed that Christ instituted it.

On this supposition, how unfaithful must they have been to the trust committed to them by Christ, the sacred depositum of saving truth, and to the souls of men?

This, though a negative argument, yet is attended with such circumstances of credibility, as render it scarce less evident than mathematical demonstration.

2. The very institution of the sacrament, as recorded by three of the Evangelists and by the apostle *Paul*, utterly overthrows the Popish doctrine of the sacrifice of the Mass.

Our Saviour, when he instituted the Lord's supper, stood not at an altar, but sat or leaned at a table; he offered nothing to God but prayers, and praises or thanksgivings; what he gave to his Disciples was bread and wine, not to be worshipped or sacrificed, but eaten and drank.

What

What they did, they were to do in remembrance of Christ, not for an expiation of their sins; the Apostles delivered to us what they received of Christ, not a sacrifice, but a Sacrament.

The parallel, which divers have drawn between the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and the sacrifice of the Mass, greatly strengthens our argument. 1. In the Mass, the Priest offers (or pretends to offer) Christ to God (according to them) God receives him as a sacrifice, wherewith he is well pleased: but in the Lord's supper, God gives us his Christ, and we receive him by faith. 2. In the Mass, Christ is offered as a sacrifice; in the Lord's supper, we have a standing monument and memorial of his satisfactory suffering and death. 3. In the Mass, they say Christ offers himself, though before they had said, the Priest offered him for a sacrifice; in the Lord's supper, Christ gave his Disciples bread, and said, take, eat. 4. In the Mass, the *Papists* represent Christ, bidding his Disciples to offer him in sacrifice; but in the Lord's supper, the Protestants justly understand him to have meant no more, than eat in remembrance of me, and continue the observance of this rite till my second coming. 5. In the Mass, the Priest bids the people take, and yet gives them nothing, or at least what is likest a shadow of any substance, a thin wafer; but

but in the Lord's supper, Christ gave his Disciples bread, and bid them eat it. 6. In the Sacrament, Christ is remembred as absent, (*viz.* as to his humane nature) but in the Mass he is sacrificed as present. And lastly, to name no more; in the Sacrament, Christ is honoured as our only Saviour; but Masses are said in honour to Saints, and by way of suffrage for the dead: if then, the one of these be Christ's institution, the other plainly is not.

3. We may argue against the sacrifice of the Mass, from the inconsistency of a Sacrament and a sacrifice; I mean, that the same thing should be the one, and the other, especially now under the Gospel; and using the words in their strictest and most proper sense, a Gospel Sacrament can by no means be a true, proper, propitiatory sacrifice; and therefore the *Eucharist* cannot be so: whence it follows, that the Mass is all cheat and usurpation, and nothing at all of what the *Papists* pretend it is.

A Sacrament is a pledge and seal of God's grace to us, and is received as such by the faithful; but a sacrifice is (as has been already hinted) something offered unto God, and graciously accepted by him from us, or on our account.

But

But they say, the elements being transubstantiated, as they are distributed to the receivers, are a Sacrament, but as offered to God, they are a sacrifice.

But this is a vain plea, since it is demonstrable, and has been demonstrated that Transubstantiation is absurd and impossible; and it is plain, the Sacrament was instituted to be receiv'd by us, not offered to God. We are indeed in the use of that, and other holy instituted rites, to offer up our selves living sacrifices unto God by Jesus Christ, which is our reasonable service, *Rom. xii. 1.* But there the sacrifice is *figurative* not *proper*, *Eucharistical* not *propitiatory*, for if none of us can redeem his brother, surely much less can any of us redeem himself, or offer to God an attonement for his own sins.

4. The Scripture is full and express in asserting the unity of Christ's priesthood and sacrifice; therefore the Popish Priests are no proper Priests, and the Popish Mass is no proper sacrifice: this they must grant, unless they will deny Christ to have been a proper Priest, and his oblation on the Cross a proper sacrifice: or will assert that one, and the same thing may be both single and double, which perhaps the Assertors of Transubstantiation will not stick at, though in so doing they render both their persons and profession perfectly ridiculous.

I shall here only mention a few plain positive texts of Scripture, because I would not draw out matters to an undue length: Christ alone received and fulfilled his Fathers command, to lay down his life for his sheep, *John* x. 18.

All the Priests and Sacrifices of the old Testament were Types of him, as the Apostle to the *Hebrews* largely proves, he was the only high Priest, that was such as became us (or was suitable to, and sufficient to answer the necessity of our case) being holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and higher than the Heavens (*i. e.* as I understand it, more excellent than the very highest Angels) *Heb.* vii. 26. he is our only Mediator, and therefore our only Priest, *1 Tim.* ii. 5. for his Priesthood flows from his Mediatorship, in which he has no partners or successors, his Priesthood only is eternal and unchangeable, *Heb.* vii. 24.

And as his Priesthood was singular, so was his Sacrifice, *Heb.* vii. 27. He needed not daily to offer up sacrifice, but did sufficiently expiate sin, when he once offered up himself. This is so fully insisted upon in the ninth Chapter of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, that I shall not turn to the particular Verses, but desire you to read and consider the whole chapter, and weigh the force and consequence of the Apostles argument

ment there, and you will be abundantly satisfied, that there never was, nor can be any more than one true real proper propitiatory sacrifice, of which the legal sacrifices were but Types ; and therefore the *Mass* is not, cannot be a proper sacrifice, much less the very same (as the *Papists* say it is) with that which Christ himself offered upon the Cross.

They of the Church of *Rome* pretend to solve all this, by distinguishing between a sacrifice of redemption or satisfaction, and a sacrifice of application and worship ; and again between a bloody and an unbloody sacrifice ; and further, between one that is primitive and primary, and one that is only secondary and dependent, and to clinch the nail between a sacrifice of immolation, and a sacrifice of representation and commemoration.

But besides, that all these are distinctions coined at pleasure, and which have no footstep or foundation, either in reason or Scripture, they are nothing to the purpose, and are indeed all of them, but especially the last a sneaking desertion (if not a down right giving up) of their cause.

For if the Lord's supper be no more than a sacrifice of representation and commemoration ; Why do they burn Protestants for not believing Transubstantiation, and call them *Hereticks* and *Schismaticks* for not going to *Mass* ?

5. The nature of a propitiatory sacrifice plainly proves the *Mass* not to be such, for it is essential to such a sacrifice, that the thing sacrificed be a living creature, and that it be slain and the blood of it shed.

But the *Papists* broaden God in the *Mass* is not such, therefore it can be no proper propitiatory sacrifice.

The asserting an *unbloody sacrifice*, is affirming that to be a sacrifice, of which at the same time we affirm that it is no sacrifice, which is the most gross and palpable of all contradictions. The Apostle assures us, that without shedding of blood there is no remission, and so no propitiatory sacrifice; and he argues that if Christ were to be offered often, he must have suffered often, *Heb. ix. 22, 25, 26.*

If Christ then be *offered, sacrificed* in the *Mass*, then he suffers and is killed, and the Popish Priests are his merciless murderers.

And what reason can they give us of a greater necessity of Christ's being often offer'd *since* his incarnation than *before*? He having by *one offering* perfected them that are sanctified; believers *since* his coming in the flesh are sav'd by that *one offering*, as well as those who lived and died *before* his assumption of the humane nature.

6. The *Papists* can assign nothing in the celebration of the *Mass*, to which the essence and formality of a sacrifice can agree: not the
the

the breaking of the bread, because the body of Christ is impassible, and they deny that this is essential to the sacrifice, they giving their wafers whole; not in the oblation by the Priest, because themselves grant that this was not done by our Saviour and his Apostles, nor is the oblation in the *Mass* made in the name of Christ, but of the Priest; not in the blessing, for to bless and to offer are two things; not in the consecration for the same reason: not in the eating, for this is not offering to God, but receiving from him, this is not the act of a Priest as such, but of every communicant, and if this made it a sacrifice, all the people must be Priests, which the *Papists* will never allow of.

7. The sacrifice of the *Mass* (as the doctrine of Transubstantiation on which it is grounded) is full of innumerable gross contradictions and absurdities; as that there is in it an external and visible sacrifice, and yet the victim or thing sacrificed cannot be seen: that there is blood shed; for it is a propitiatory sacrifice, and yet there is no blood shed, for it is an unbloody sacrifice: that the true body of Christ is offered to God the Father, and yet it is neither visible, tangible, extended, nor circumscribed, and therefore not his true and real body, nor any true and real body at all: that a wicked Priest can

make the God that made him, and eat him when he has done, which is such monstrous nonsense and hideous Blasphemy, as no *Pagan, Turk or Jew*, nothing but a *Papist* is wicked enough to be guilty of.

One thing more I cannot but note, that in the *Mass* they pretend to offer Christ the son of God to his Father, in honour of this, or that Saint, that they may be benefitted by his suffrages, *i. e.* prayers or intercessions, which is such a blundering piece of blasphemy and idolatry, and defiance to, and contempt of the divine majesty, as is not to be paralleled.

But have they no colours to paint over their deformity with, and hide it from vulgar eyes? Truly none, but very thin ones, and such as can impose upon none, but those that are more than half blind, wilfully, or judicially so.

1. They argue from *Melchizedecks* offering bread and wine, when he met *Abraham* returning from the slaughter of the Kings, *Gen. xiv. 18.*

Ans. But there is nothing said of offering them to God, but his giving them to *Abraham*; and though he be called a Priest, that proves not that he then sacrificed, or that he sacrificed bread and wine, though if he had, what were that to the *Mass*, which they pretend to be propitiatory, not Eucharistical.

2. They say, the Paschal Lamb was a Type of the *Mass*,

Ans. But

Ans. But they may say so long enough before any reasonable man will believe them: a Type of Christ indeed it was and fulfilled in him, so that there is no need of, nor room for any further accomplishment of it: besides, the Paschal Lamb was not a proper sacrifice, much less a propitiatory one, but a Sacrament; therefore if it was a Type of the *Eucharist*, then by their own argument, the Lord's supper must be a Sacrament, not a sacrifice. I pass over their other frivolous pretences, that I may just hint a word or two by way of application.

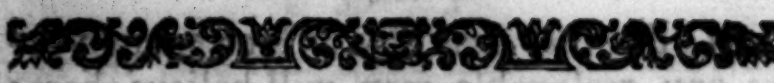
1. Thank God for Protestant Sacraments, and that *Popish Masses* are not crammed down your throats against your consciences.

2. Dread a worldly religion; if some men had not counted gain godliness, we had never heard, or known any thing of the *Mass*.

3. See that you account Scripture godliness, the truest and greatest gain, whatever you lose by it, or suffer for it at present.

4. Neither neglect the ordinance of the Lord's supper, nor pervert it by corrupting it with humane mixtures, or neglect of due preparation for it, serious and affectionate behaviour at it, and suitable walking after it.

If we aright receive Christ in the Sacrament, the experience we get there, will thoroughly fortify us against this and all other Popish errors.



DISCOURSE XXV.

Implicit Faith, inconsistent with Christian Principles.

HEB. X. 23.

Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, (for he is faithful that promised.)

 Have been (as most that now hear me know) for a considerable time, endeavouring to fortify all, but especially the youth of this audience against the dangerous and pernicious errors of Popery: having finished that, I was willing to employ this evening in clinching the nail by some instructions and advices, that may by the divine blessing render all I have said, more effectual to my designed end, which is the advancement of sacred truth, and therein of the divine glory, and your establishment and salvation.

The

The words I have read to you consist, as an excellent Preacher (whom no man needs be ashamed to learn of, or follow, on such a subject) well notes, of an exhortation, and an argument to comply with that exhortation.

The exhortation is, *To bold fast the profession of our faith without wavering.*

The argument or encouragement is, *Because he is faithful that promised.*

Christians should be constant and steady in their Religion, not like children tossed about with every wind of Doctrine, *Ephes. iv. 14.* not an easy prey to seducers, weak and fickle in their judgments; neither should they be of timorous, cowardly spirits, that can suffer nothing for the truth, but will betray it rather than endure persecution.

Nor does this imply that men should not have free leave to chuse their Religion, or enquire into the grounds or reasons of whatever is offered to their choice under that notion, but the contrary, *We are to prove all things, that we may hold fast that which is good, 1 Thess. v. 21.* though this does not suppose that all are capable of such enquiry, and they who are not capable of it, are not obliged to it.

Infants, who know not how to distinguish between the right hand and the left; Ideots, persons of extraordinary low, and mean natural

natural capacities, cramped by unhappy education that sets them very little above brutes; that is not expected from them, which those of larger capacities, and better furniture, and happier opportunities, will be justly condemnable for the neglect of.

Neither may we suppose, that the exhortation or precept in the Text, is violated by mens keeping one ear open (how well soever they may think themselves satisfied in the grounds of their present persuasion) to what may be said on the opposite side.

For that will always be as good a Law in reasoning, as it is in judicial processes, *Qui statuit aliquid, parte inaudita altera, æquum licet statuerit, hæud æquus fuit.*

I am never to think my self so sure (especially in things more remote from the foundation) as not to suppose that possibly I may be mistaken, and another can see further than I can do.

If there be such a thing as infallibility among mankind, and we know were to find it, we have an easy open way to knowledge; but if all the pretenders to that grand secret are errand Mountebanks (as most surely they are) we must be content to plod on in the way of honest industry, and use the reason God has given us the best we can, knowing that we must every one of us give an account of himself to God, *Rom. xiv. 12.* and not one of or for another, He

He that would not have, what he teacheth, examin'd, plainly shews he suspects his cause, and that what he advanceth will not bear the test, nor pass with impartial men for sound and good.

But by holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering, we mean that men should not willingly let go any, the least truth, that upon search and inquiry they believe, and are perswaded is the truth of God; that they should not suffer themselves to be seduced by false reasonings, nor wheedled by insinuating perswasions or the offers of preferment and worldly advantages, nor terrified from owning it by threats and menaces, prisons, stakes, gibbets, the strong arguments of those who obtrude known lyes for their worldly advantage, upon the credulous, or timorous part of mankind.

When we know, and are assur'd that this is the true Grace of God in which we stand, as the Apostle speaks, *1 Pet. v. 12.* We ought not to be soon shaken in mind, to waver, to doubt, or tremble or fear what man can do unto us, but live and dye by the sacred truths of the God of truth.

There is a great difference between stubbornness and constancy, and it lies in this, that the stubborn man has taken up his Religion by chance, by education or interest; but the constant man owes his to the blessing
of

of God, on serious and impartial inquiry, and diligent search and study.

Here we may inquire 1st, what it is we are here exhorted to hold fast, and that is the profession of our faith, I mean, of our holy Christian Religion into which we were baptized, and which we still continue to own and profess: Christianity in its articles of faith, in its rules of practice, in its methods of worship, the entireness and purity of its ordinances and administrations, the communion of Saints, the assured prospects of Glory, founded on the plain and express promises of the Gospel Covenant: These we are to hold fast, to own and profess them, to practice according to them, to suffer patiently for them, if we are called forth thereunto.

We are therefore not to be born down by the pretences to antiquity or infallibility; which they are the most forward to advance, who know themselves to be in the wrong, and for filthy lucre speak things which they ought not, 1 *Tim.* v. 13.

The Catholick Apostolick Christian faith we are to hold to; all that is besides, much more against it, we are warranted, yea obliged to reject, and are highly blame-worthy if we do not.

2. Let us inquire how we are to hold fast this profession of our faith.

And

And 1st, We must hold it fast against those, who without Scripture or Reason, do confidently assert they are in the right, and would have us believe them on their own bare word.

This is the impudent claim of the Church of *Rome*; but since we have no methods of judging, but Reason and Revelation, if they produce neither on their side, we ought to hold our own, and not suffer them by meer dint of confidence (or impudence rather) to huff us out of our senses, and lead us blindfold, in spite of the plainest dictates of Reason, and the most positive assertions of the holy inspired Writers.

There is not the giddiest Enthusiast that ever breathed, that I would not as soon believe, as I would the Pope or the Council of *Trent*, when they tell me I must believe Transubstantiation, Purgatory, &c. without bringing any sound proof from Reason or Scripture that God has revealed them, or that they are true, or the belief of them necessary to salvation. I see no reason why I should believe them any more than a Quaker or a *French* Prophet, whom I will believe, if they bring reason or scripture for what they say, but not else; and why a Pope or a Council should require more of me, I am yet to learn.

We

We are to believe no man that pretends to be a Prophet, or to bring a new doctrine, without he can attest his doctrine and mission by miracles ; our Saviour and his Apostles miracles are a sufficient seal to the christian doctrine, as long as time shall last ; but if more is to be added thereto, we must have the same proof, or we may very innocently, nay ought in conscience to suspend our belief, *1 John iv. 1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God: because many false Prophets are gone into the world.*

What proof have we from Reason or Scripture of the Pope's supremacy ; or that the Church of *Rome* is the Mother and Mistress of all Churches?

Is the Doctrine of Purgatory probable to Reason, or to be accounted for from Scripture?

Where do you find in Scripture any precept or pattern for praying to Saints and Angels?

These, and many more like, you must believe and profess, if you will be good *Roman* Catholics ; but thanks be to God you may be very good Christians, without so much as knowing that ever such doctrines were held, or practices enjoy'd in any part of the Christian Church.

2. We must hold fast the profession of the christian faith ; though men confidently tell
us,

us, that that is essential to it, which is not only without proof from Reason and Scripture, but moreover is directly and flatly contrary thereunto; and not only so, but contrary to the very common sense and apprehension of all mankind.

Reason, Scripture and Sense, are all the means and helps we have of discerning truth from falsehood; and if men will cram down our throats what is contrary to them all, we have nothing left but to resist unto blood, striving against sin, *Heb. xii. 4.* Such errors are worthy of no better confutation than a blunt *mentiris*; and to comply with them on any score, is to proclaim our selves the worst of fools, brutes in humane shape, that have neither sense, reason nor religion left.

Can a man worship an Image without making himself a stock? Can he pray in an unknown tongue without being a barbarian to others, and a meer sot to himself, if he understand the language in which he speaks no more (as may be the case) than they in whose company, and perhaps in whose name he prays? Can any thing be more contrary to Scripture, than the concealing of the Scripture from the Laity? or to Sense, than their doctrine of Transubstantiation? or to the kingly authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, than their half Communion?

3. We ought to hold fast the profession of our faith against all the allurements and affrightments of this present evil world; that is, we ought to be honest men, to believe that God is greater than men and Devils; and that we (nor none else) shall ever be losers by a firm and faithful adherence to him, his truth, cause and interest; if we believe not this we are Atheists; if we believe it, we are fools whenever we give ground and turn Apostates.

Why should we follow a multitude to do evil, which we are expressly by God himself forbidden to do? *Exod. xxiii. 2.* Is it worth while to incur his displeasure that we may be in the fashion? Does not reason tell us that it is more honourable to be alone in the right, than to run into a common prevailing error? that if Kings and Nobles err, their Rank cannot patronize, much less justify their mistake. *Solomon* hath told us, that *Better is a poor and wise Child, than an old and foolish King, that will no more be admonished,* *Eccles. iv. 13.* Religion is that thing in all the world, in which fashion ought to have least to do, and come least into consideration.

Sad is their Case who had rather run fashionably to Hell, than be out of the mode, though in the true and only way to Heaven.

And

And as Example should not sway us in matters of Religion, so much less should worldly interest and advantage; he was certainly an ill adviser, who being ask'd which was the best body of divinity, answer'd, that which would enable a man to keep his Coach and six.

They who take gain and godliness for synonymous terms; as their Religion is like to do them little hurt in this world, so it's like to do them less good in the next.

The love of riches makes men turn aside from the faith, and sacrifice their Consciences to their Interest; but they will find at last that they have made a sad exchange, *1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. 2 Tim. iv. 10.*

How many have lost their souls to gratify their covetousness and ambition: they who are in danger of this temptation, ought well and often to consider those words of our blessed Lord, *Matt. xvi. 26. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul.*

And as the allurements, so the affrightments of the world should not remove us from our own steadfastness: Persecution is a sore trial, but happy they that hold their integrity; if we are faithful to the death, Christ will be as good as his word, and give us the crown of eternal life, *Rev. ii. 10.*

Fear is a passion deeply rooted in humane nature and hard to conquer, but faith will give us the victory over it.

Faith or fear must conquer when it comes to the tryal; if fear get the full victory, we are lost; if faith triumph, we are safe.

Let us always remember this, that no man shall be finally a loser by his faithfulness to Christ and his Interest, *Luke xii. 4, 5.*

4. If we would hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, we must be fortified against the pretensions of those who would take upon them to shew us another, a shorter and surer, a safer and easier way to salvation than that we have already embraced on scripture grounds.

Repentance, and faith and holiness, are the King's high way to Heaven; whoever walks therein shall obtain the end of his faith and hope, the salvation of his soul. But the Papists (and other deceivers) have found out other (and as they would persuade us, better) ways thither, but believe them not; to the Law and to the Testimony, if they speak not according to that word, there is no light (much less any infallibility) in them, *Isa. viii. 20.*

The Papists pretend that Attrition, with Confession to a Priest, will do the feat, without Contrition or renovation of the heart, and reformation of the life; but this cannot be,

be, or else the Apostle was much in the wrong to tell us, that *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14.

5. If we would hold fast the profession of the faith, we must take heed of the Disputers of this world; men that by much craftiness, study to involve all Religion in needless and endless disputes, that think if they can puzzle a man, they are in a fair way to proselyte him, and had rather he should be of no Religion than not of theirs, and commonly take that way to make men of none, that they may be of theirs; this is a common and fatal method of Popery, to perplex weak and unstable people with diversity of opinions, and tell them how hard it is among so many to fix upon what is right, and this only, that they themselves may lead them blindfold whither they list.

Against such we are frequently warned in Scripture, *Matt. xxiv. 4. And Jesus answered and said unto them, take heed that no man deceive you. Ephes. iv. 14. That we henceforth be no more Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the slight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive. Heb. xiii. 9. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines; for it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace, not with meats which have not profited them that have*

been occupied therein. 2 Pet. iii. 17. Ye, therefore beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware least ye also being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

Take heed therefore of an implicit faith, do not read and hear all of one side; truth will bear canvassing, but error is loath to come into the open light, or abide the test of reason and scripture: believe no Church that boasts of her own infallibility or perfection, or that she excels all other Churches: this is too much to be believed upon the bare word of any man, or body of men in the world; on this ground the Jewish Rulers must have been in the right in condemning Christ, and the common people had been in the right to fall in with them; and after this rate *Laodicea* had been (as she boasted her self) the best of all the seven *Asian* Churches, *Rev.* iii. 17. but he deserves to be deceived that will take boasts for proofs. Let not meer names deceive you: What a noise has the Church of *Rome* made with her being the Catholick Church, and what multitudes have been deceived to their eternal ruin, by that pompous sound? whereas, if men sift it, the pretence is really ridiculous, and you may as well call my little finger my whole body, as the Church of *Rome* the Catholick Church; no more ground have they from the pretence of

of their perpetual visibility, to presume they are the only true Church, a presumption they impose upon others without the least shadow of proof; the Church is sometimes in the wilderness, and the Romish Church has not always been visible, for it is but comparatively, lately, that she was at all what she now is, and the true Church of Christ, without her corruptions and additions, has been visible ever since the Apostles days, and will be so in greater or lesser degrees to the end of time.

I should now consider the encouragement in the text, *he is faithful that hath promised.*

And here we might represent to you, who it is that has promised, and to whom.

1. The Promiser is the great, the only, the eternal *Jehovah*, most powerful, wise and good; one who is truth it self, and never fail'd of accomplishing any of those good words, on which he has caused his People to hope.

2. What it is he has promised, *viz.* to be the God of believers, which includes all the good they are capable of in this and the future world; *he will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them*, Psal. lxxxiv. 11.

3. To

3. To whom, *viz.* to them that believe, and hold fast the profession of their faith without wavering, who boldly adhere to him and his interest in the worst of times: *If we suffer with Christ, we shall also reign with him, 2 Tim. ii. 12. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life, Rev. ii. 10.*

Use. 1. Let our Religion be our choice; rest not in that which comes to us by chance, by birth, education, &c. He that gives his Assent without just reason, if he be in the right is so but by chance; and it's much to be questioned if the luckiness of the accident will excuse for the irregularity of the proceeding; whereas he, who diligently and faithfully uses the powers God has given him in order to determine his assent in a right manner, though he should miss of truth, will yet secure the reward of his fidelity.

2. When you have prov'd all things, hold fast that which is good, *1 Thes. v. 20.*

3. Always suspect that for a false Religion which dares not stand the test, is loath to come to a fair and impartial tryal.

4. Make not the profession of Religion truckle to worldly advantages; Religion is designed for the saving of the soul, and to subject it to any meaner purposes, is to destroy it.

5. Live

5. Live up to your light sins against light ;
wast the conscience, and provoke the Spirit
of God to withdraw ; for this many have
been given up to strong delusion to believe
lyes, 2 *Thes.* ii. 11.

6. Live in the believing views of eternity
as sure and near.

Young ones be serious, God and men ob-
serve you, death may overtake you before you
are aware, you are of a good Religion, be
good in it, and then you shall be blessings to
the world while you are in it ; and you will
be ready to go out of it at the suddenest call,
and to finish your course with Joy.

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